

Μεθ' Ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός:

OR THE
DOCTRINE
OF A
G O D
AND
PROVIDENCE,
Vindicated and Asserted.

By *Tho. Gregory*, M. A. late of *Wadham*
College in *Oxford*, and now Lecturer
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IMPRIMATUR,

Carolus Alston R. P. D. *Hen. Episc. Lond.* à
Sacris. September 3. 1694.

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Viro Dignissimo,

Nec non

Honoratissimo Domino ac Patrono
suo, Reverendo admodum in
Christo Patri *HENRICO Episcopo*
Londinensi,

Egregio Familiae ipsius Nobilissimae
Ornamento, Virtutum juxta atq;
Literarum Decoris & Praesidio,
Purissimae Ecclesiarum, Anglicanae,
Propugnatori Acerrimo,
Divinae Cujusque Veritatis
φιλοσόφῳ,

Hoc suum quaecunque opus,
Quod in insipientem *Ἀρνησιθέων* Sapi-
entiam elucubratum est,
Reverentiâ, quâ potest, Maximâ,
Humillimoque Animi Gratissimi
Obsequio

D. D. D. Q.

Thomas Gregorius.

T H E

P R E F A C E.

THE unprejudic'd Reader (I presume) will most easily excuse me, if I make no Apology for the Publication of these Papers; the undisguis'd and insolent Appearance of Atheism now amongst us, and the unhappy over-flowings of Profaneness and Infidelity still rendring Discourses of this nature (to the great Concern and Amazement of all truly Pious and Thinking Persons) absolutely necessary. I shall therefore only intreat the Reader, with all due seriousness and attention, to consider the weight and importance of the Subject now before us. That we are not driving on the trifling, insignificant interest of a Party, nor unaccountably wasting our precious

The Preface.

time in the idle prosecution of airy, useless, and empty Speculations; but endeavouring the Extirpation of such Doctrines and Principles, as put the Foundations of the Earth entirely out of course, involve all Mankind in Anarchy and Confusion, and over-shade the intellectual World with Eternal Night and Darkness; ungratefully interposing their malignant Blackness, and eclipsing (as much as they can) the refreshing Splendors and Brightness of the King of Glory. That therefore it highly concerns him, where-ever he shall in this, or in any other more excellent Treatise find any thing really destructive of such monstrous Doctrines, there resolutely and courageously to fix and bottom; and not to be led away with the sophistical Harangues and delusive Impertinences of Thoughtless Men, nor (to the dishonour of his Maker, the Grief of all Good Men, and the utter Ruine of his Present as well as Future Happiness) most shamefully and inexcusably to fall from his own steadfastness.

The Preface.

ness. This (I say) is all I think necessary to advise the Reader. Which if he vouchsafes to accept with the same ingenuity as 'tis offer'd, he'll (I hope) have no Reason to repent his perusal of these Papers. If not; However I have done my duty, and therefore shall humbly leave the Event to Him; whose is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty for ever.

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THough the voice of Nature and Reason loudly proclaims this Truth, and all our senses are encountred with the clearest evidences and highest demonstrations of a Providence; though our Fathers have told us what Works he hath done in their times of old, and our own eyes (if we do not wilfully shut them) daily see his Glory: Yet (I speak it to our shame) there are not wanting some, even in this our day, who through their corrupt practices, and abominable impure conversations have so debauch'd their Understandings, extinguish'd the light of Reason, and so deeply sunk the rational Soul into Flesh and Sensuality, that that noble Creature, which was design'd for the conversation of Angels, and the everlasting Fruition of the prime Beauty it self, is shamefully become like the Beasts that perish. As though God had left himself entirely without Witness, and we could trace no Footsteps of his Providence in the World, they boldly open their Mouths in Blasphemy against him that made them; and their talking is altogether against the most High. Like the rebellious *Israelites*, they still distrust

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trust his presence ; and though they daily and hourly enjoy the sweet effects of it, yet they murmuringly ask, whether he be indeed amongst them, or not ? Wherefore to obviate in some measure that torrent of impiety, which from the malignant influence of these unreasonable Men, may unhappily arise upon the World, and disturb the Peace of our Sion ; I shall endeavour through the gracious assistance of my blessed Maker to shew, that (notwithstanding all the cavils and disputes of Men of corrupt Minds) God doth in very deed Reign over all the World.

In order to this, it may perhaps be thought necessary, that the ground-work of my Discourse should be the irrefragable proof of the Deity it self. But I shall wave the direct and immediate handling of that subject at this time, not so much, either because there may be many, who (like *Epicurus*) deny his Providence, yet allow his Being : Or because it has been copiously done by many excellent hands already ; as chiefly, because the arguments, whereby I shall endeavour to prove his Providence, do not suppose, but necessarily and unavoidably conclude too for his Being. To premise then no farther ; All that can be said, why God should not take care of the World, must necessarily be resolv'd into this disjunctive Proposition, that either he cannot, or that he

he will not. The former destroys his Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence ; The latter his Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness ; both by consequence his very Being or Existence. So that to proceed with the greater clearness and perspicuity, I see it necessary, before I take upon me the direct proof of a Providence, to shew in the first place, that (if I may have leave for the present to suppose there is a God) all these Attributes do inseparably belong to the Divine Nature, and consequently that God is both able, and also willing to preside over us, that so these rubs and impediments being thrown out of the way, we may be the more easily carried from his ability and willingness to shew, that he actually does preside over us.

1. Then, God is Omnipotent, and so is able to preside over us. Some things indeed there are, which cannot be effected by the power of God himself. Whatever involves a contradiction, or is repugnant to his Essential Perfections, falls not within the Sphere of the Divine activity. Thus God cannot cause a thing to be, and not to be, at the same time in the same respect, nor make that not to have been, which hath already been. He cannot want who is All-sufficient ; nor dye, who is essentially and necessarily existent. Now, whatever some of

the later Heathens have thought, these things are so far from derogating from the power of God, as that they are rather demonstrations of his Omnipotence, than arguments of Imbecillity. For every kind of faculty is necessarily determin'd to its own proper objects, as the Eye to things visible, the Understanding to things intelligible, and the Ear to things audible, none of which can be ever charged with deficiency, provided it duly exerciseth its operations about its own proper objects. Now the object of power you know, is that only which is possible, or in other terms, that only which implies no repugnancy or contradiction. As then that Understanding is truly said to be infinite, which fully comprehends all things, that are intelligible, or that can be understood, though it cannot make excursions beyond its own bounds, or understand the things that are not intelligible, or to be understood; so that power is as truly and properly said to be infinite, which extends it self to all things simply and absolutely possible, and which can act or produce, whatsoever can be acted or produc'd, without any possibility of impediment or resistance, tho' it cannot lanch out into the depth of impossibilities, or do those things, which belong not to any power to be done. Being then those things, that either immediately or con-

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sequentially imply a contradiction, do not belong to any power to be done, they no more diminish the rays of God's Glory, tho' he cannot do them, nor cause any greater derogation to his infinite power, than things audible or visible detract from the excellency of the Understanding, which dilates it self through the utmost regions of things intelligible, or that can be understood. So then if it can be shewn, that God is able to effect every thing, which is the proper object of power, or that can be done; that not all the powers in Earth or Heaven are able to make any resistance to his will, but that when he hath purpos'd, none can disannul it, when his hand is stretched out, none can turn it back: If, I say, it can be shewn, that his power is thus exalted above all opposition whatsoever. we must acknowledge it to be absolute and infinite. And now what great Criticism is there requisite to find out, that his power is thus absolute and infinite? It belongs to the natural notion of him, and 'tis impossible for a Man rightly to attend to the Divine Nature, and not to cry out with *Jehosaphat*, *In thine hand, O God, is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?* For if we have any true conception of him, he must of necessity appear to be the first of Beings, who exists independently and of himself, i. e. borrows his

original from no other ; but how can such a Being be limited or circumscribed ? Or who can set him his bounds, which he shall not pass ? Nothing surely can be limited, but by something which is before it. But was any thing before him, who is the first as well as the last ? Any thing coæval with him, who only hath immortality ? Again, all other things in the World beside God were either made, or not made : If not made, then they are self-subsistent ; and if self-subsistent, then since every Being naturally desires its utmost perfection, they would questionless have invested themselves with all imaginable perfections, and so would be independent and all-sufficient. But,

as † *Aristotle* well observes, and daily experience proves true, nothing beside God is thus independent and all-sufficient, and consequently nothing

beside him self-subsistent. It remains then, that they were made. Made then they were either by themselves, or by some other. By themselves 'twas impossible, for so they must both have been, and not have been at the same time in the same respect. They must have been, because they acted, *viz.* made themselves, for nothing can act, but what is ; they must not have been, because they were not yet made, and therefore they were in being, and not in being at the same time

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† *Lib. de
Mundo
Cap. 6.*

in the same respect. But this is a palpable contradiction. Made then they were by some other, and consequently by God alone, nothing (as 'tis observ'd before) being existent before all things but He. This is acknowledg'd by all, that allow the Creation of the World. To inferr then; He, who alone made the Earth by his Power, establish'd the World by his Wisdom, and stretched out the Heavens by his Discretion; He, who plac'd Man and Beast upon the face of the ground, and fill'd the spacious plains above with Myriads of his Holy ones: He, I say, who did all this only by the actual determination of his Will, must needs be irresistible in Power, as well as incomprehensible in Wisdom. For who can be equal to him in Power, to whom all Power originally belongs? Who can oppose, or make Head against him, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Is it possible, that he should find any resistance from the Work of his own hands? Or that the clay should hinder the potter from moulding it into what shape he pleaseth? Who then hath not known, who hath not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? Lift up your eyes on high, and behold that Royal Host of Heaven. He bringeth them out by num-

ber, he calleth them all by their names ; by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in Power, not one faileth. When he commandeth, they fight from Heaven ; The Stars in their courses fought against *Sisera* : Fire and Hail too, Snow and Vapour, Stormy-wind, all fulfill his word. Men do therefore stand up, and bless his glorious name, which is exalted above all Blessing and Praise. Angels and Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the company of Heaven cast their never-fading and immortal Crowns before the Throne, and worship him, who reigneth for ever and ever. They cease not day nor night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Nay there is no Nation under Heaven, no time nor Country, wherein many have not continually given him this Honour : He is ordinarily stil'd by the *Greeks* Παντοκράτωρ, and by the *Latins* *Jupiter Omnipotens, Pater Omnipotens, & Opt. Max.* The Orators and Poets too in many places spake excellently to the same purpose : The sence of all which is, (to use the words of the royal Psalmist, *Ps.* 97. 9. and of the humbl'd Tyrant of *Babylon*) *The Lord is high above all the Earth, he is exalted far above all Gods.* He doth according to his will in the Armies of Heaven, and amongst the Inhabitants of the

the Earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what do'st thou? Thus you see this one Eternal, Independent Being, God, is abundantly qualify'd for the Government of the World upon the account of his Power. He is so,

2. In respect of his Knowledge, for he is Omniscient, as well as Omnipotent, infinite in Knowledge, as well as infinite in Power. Many ways have been taken by learned Men for the proof of this Attribute; but being no Friend to fruitless, unnecessary disputes, I shall industriously wave all such arguments, as rather confound and perplex, than convince and resolve the judgment, and endeavour with all the perspicuity imaginable to lay before you this truth. Wherefore not to tell you, that God may therefore be said to be Omniscient, because comprehending within himself all the Ideas and Essences of things, together with all their possible references and respects; you need only remember, that Knowledge is a perfection, which therefore cannot be wanting to that Being, which (as it appears from what has been already discours'd) is absolutely perfect. It has often entitl'd Men to more than Humane Veneration; for, if we run over the Catalogue of the Heathen Deities, tho' some of them by trophies, victories, and assaults did, as it were, take Heaven it self, yet

yet we shall find, that in the greatest number of them Knowledge was the ladder, by which they ascended to Divine honours. If then so great a measure of this perfection has been in the Creatures, how must all its lines necessarily Concentre in the Creator himself? He that made the eye, shall not he see? He that gives to Man understanding, shall not he know? Doubtless he seeth not as Man seeth, but his Knowledge is absolute, infinite, and unbounded. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. The black obscure chambers of Death are as clear to him as the Light; and the gloomy Regions of everlasting darkness as bright as the noon-day: We indeed see through a glass darkly, but He comprehends every single object with a most perfect infallible view. We reason and infer, premise and conclude, and yet seldom arrive to the certainty of a demonstration; but He with one single act of intuition glanceth through the whole possibility of Being. The understandings of the most searching inquisitive Creatures, have been often puzzled and soil'd by some Phænomena in Nature, and the Angels themselves, (as we shall see at large in its proper place) though Creatures of noble faculties and exalted understandings, have not been able to see to the bottom of Divine determinations: But there is no creature,
that

that is not manifest in his sight, πάντα δὲ
 γυμνά & τετραχιλισμένα. but as the
 entrails of the sacrifice, and the ^{Heb. 4.13.}
 other most secret parts were all laid open
 and discernible before the Priest, by cutting
 the Sacrifice down the neck or back-bone,
 so all things, even the thoughts of our
 hearts, and our most hidden contrivances
 are naked and open unto the eyes of him,
 πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος. to whom we must give
 an account. This has been generally ac-
 knowledg'd by all Nations in the World, and
 Plato has therefore call'd God the Soul of
 the World, because he not only diffuseth him-
 self through the whole mass, actuating or
 giving life and motion to all its parts, but
 chiefly because he apprehended him to be no
 less conscious to all our actions than our spi-
 rits themselves, as intimately acquainted
 with our greatest privacies, being a discer-
 ner of our very thoughts and intentions. But
 not to insist upon the testimony of particu-
 lar Authors, That common custom amongst
 all Nations of swearing by him, and calling
 him to witness to the sincerity of their hearts,
 sufficiently declares an universal belief of this
 Attribute. I should now proceed,

3. To speak a word or two of his Omni-
 presence, an Attribute equally requisite
 to the great Governour of the World, as ei-
 ther his Omniscience, or Omnipotence. But
 though

though both the Ancients and Moderns have question'd this Attribute more than any other ; yet the concessions on both sides prove enough for my purpose, and so save me the trouble of enlarging here upon it. For though I cannot believe, but that God is (as the Ancient Philosophers tell us, when they describe him to be a Circle, whose centre is every where, and circumference no where) not only in Heaven , but every where else too substantially and essentially present ; yet if to stop the mouths of Gainsayers I should grant, that he is in this World only virtually and efficaciously, by his Wisdom and Power, I should give nothing, that would any ways invalidate the truth of our assertion, since one way or other they all acknowledge his Providence. Thus then 'tis plain, that the hand of the Lord is not shortned, that it cannot save : But that (if he please) he can without any the least interruption of his own essential happiness, extend his particular providence to every individual thing in the World. And that he will be pleased thus graciously to deal with us, we can have no reason to doubt, if we consider :

1. That Wisdom is essential to his nature, and that therefore he cannot do any thing but for wise and great ends. Did he then by his all-creating voice call the beauteous
Fabrick

Fabrick of this World out of the Abyſs of vanity, and nothing, only to ſtand by, and behold ſo goodly a Frame hurried about by the unſtable methods of Chance and Fortune? What prudent Man, after he has built a ſtately Veſſel, ever commits it without Pilate or Mariner to the mercy of the Winds and Seas? Surely at this rate Natures God would be leſs wiſe than her ſelf, who, as the Philoſopher truly obſerves, does nothing in vain. But,

2. God will take care of the World, becauſe he is juſt. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right, was but a rational expoſtulation of the Patriarch with God; for injuſtice is ſo great a blemiſh, ſuch a ſtain and diſreputation, even to the Sons of Men, that many thereby have been expoſed to ſhame, and Judges themſelves been overthrown in ſtony places. What baſe unworthy thoughts then muſt he have of God, who can preſume to rob him of this neceſſary, this inſeparable Attribute? An Attribute ſo eſſential to the God-head, that we may as well ſay with the Fool there is no God, as deny this God to be infinitely juſt. Can he then, who is independent and all-ſufficient, a circle of Excellency, and an endleſs orb of Perfection, either be inclin'd through partiality, or corrupted with gifts, or be any other ways tempted to neglect or violate the Laws of juſtice?

justice? Whatever they suppose, who are at ease in Sion, and therefore cannot endure to reflect upon the dismal appearances of the great day of accounts, yet certainly, as the Divine Philosopher in his *Theatetus* speaks, οὐδὲν ἴσθαμι ἰσθαμῶς ἀδίκος, ἀλλ' αἰς οἷον εἰ δικαιοτάτος· i. e. God is not, cannot in any respect whatever be unjust, but must necessarily be just in the highest degree. Though therefore he is strong and patient, and doth not execute his anger every day; yet doubtless he is a righteous Judge, who will at length render to every Man according to his Works. The sober Heathens were always of this mind, and therefore though St. Paul found some at Athens, who mock'd when they heard of the Resurrection of the dead, yet we hear of none, that reply'd against the Doctrine of a future Judgment. They rightly understood both the temper of their own Spirits, and also the nature of God's, and therefore had before-hand concluded, that there was a judgment to come. But now how can God judge the World in righteousness, if he will not vouchsafe to mind the things, that are in the World? How can he minister true judgment unto the People, if he sees not, if he knows not what Men do upon the Earth? Since then Justice is so essential to the Godhead, that he may as well cease to be, as to be just: Since therefore

fore he will at length erect his Tribunal, when all the seeming Inequalities, which so much disquiet our minds in his present dispensation, shall be adjusted, and these jarring discords become one perfect Harmony and Proportion : Since according to the several degrees of merit and demerit in these, that stand to be judged, he shall impartially distribute the several degrees of Rewards and Punishments, so that the Heavens will be forc'd to declare his Righteousness, and Angels and Archangels to applaud his Justice : He must not, he cannot be a Stranger to things done here below. He must search us out, and know us, be about our Paths, and about our Beds, and spy out all our ways. There must not be a word in our tongue, but he must know it altogether. He must understand all our thoughts, and pierce into the depth of our most hidden counsels, for else it might unluckily fall out, that there might at last be no Reward for the Righteous, though there should be a God to judge those, that liv'd in the Earth. Wherefore by what means we are assur'd of his Justice, by the same we are secur'd of his Providence : But we are as sure of his Justice as of his very Being; and therefore must conclude, that as sure as God is, he will take care of the World. But

3. Who can reasonably doubt of the kind Providence of Heaven, that has in the least tasted that God is Good? This is the first, the clearest Notion we have of him, the brightest and loveliest emanation of him, who is Loveliness it self. He is so good, that a Man may as soon number the Stars of Heaven, the drops of Rain, or the days of Eternity, as fathom the depth of this immense, this unbounded Ocean. The Philosophers think no words high enough to express it. *Plato* styles him ἰδέαν τῆς Ἀγαθῆς, The *Idea* or very Essence of Goodness, and makes him under this Name the first Hypostasis in his celebrated *Triad*. *Jamblichus* to the same purpose calls him, τὸ ὄντως Ἀγαθόν; and *Hierocles*, τὴν καὶ ῥαίαν ἀγαθότητα. *Seneca* assures us, that *Goodness* is not only the principal Attribute of the Deity, but also the very Foundation as I may so say, whereon all the others are built: *Primus est Deorum cultus*, says he, *Deos credere; deinde reddere illis Majestatem suam, reddere Bonitatem, sine qua nulla Majestas*. The Doctors in the *Talmud* speak much after the same rate; and if they say true, *St. Austin* (as the learned *Gregory's* Posthuma. Chaplain observes) needed not to have answered him so roughly, who ask'd him what God employ'd himself about before the World was made? He was not making Hell for such bold Inquisitors

quisitors, but creating repentance, say they, or contriving all the ways how he might be merciful enough to the Man he is so mindful of, and to the Son of Man he so much regardeth. Nay, that this in very deed is his Favourite, his darling Excellence, in which his Soul takes most delight and complacency; The Holy Scriptures too do abundantly testify: God is, say they, what? Wisdom? or Justice? or Power? or Majesty? No, God is love. He is indeed a great and terrible God; infinite, as I have shewn, in Power, infinite in Wisdom, infinite in Justice: But they seem, as it were, to overlook all these Perfections, whilst they tell us in the abstract, that he is Love. This is his name, and this his memorial throughout all Generations; His I say, truly, properly, incommunicably His, as appears from our Saviour's answer to the Man, who (looking upon him only as a mere Man) called him good Master; Why callest thou me good? says he, there is none good but one, that is God. Now then, if God be thus essentially good, who can imagine, but that he will take care of his Creatures? Goodness, you know, is of its own nature communicative; and like Fire, it naturally endeavours to dilate it self, by turning all it lays hold upon into its own nature. Does the Sun then rejoyce to run his course, and

to communicate his Light to this lower World ? Doth the fond Mother take pleasure in cherishing her helpless Babe, and, though not without pains and trouble, preserve it continually in her arms from all such things as may hurt it ; and can we suppose, that God, who, (as you have seen) is the Fountain, Perfection, and very Essence of Goodness, should expose his helpless Creatures to stand upon their own legs, and to provide for themselves ? No, Thousand Thousands, says the Prophet *Daniel*, 7. 10. minister unto him, and Ten Thousand times Ten Thousand stand before him, all ready to receive his great commands, and with swiftest wing to execute his good pleasure among the Children of Men. 'Tis their highest repast indeed to lay themselves down at the Spring-head of Bliss, and incessantly to drink out of the pure River of Life, which proceedeth out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb ; yet in obedience to their great Lord they joyfully come down from their celestial Mansions, singing and praising that infinite Goodness, which so wonderfully provides for the preservation of all his Creatures ; so that, if the Lord would be pleas'd to open our eyes, as he did the young Man's at the Prayer of *Elisha*, we should behold a bright and glittering Host of auxiliary Spirits, not only watching over whole Kingdoms

doms and Communities of Men, but likewise continually incamping round about every single, individual godly Man, and with the greatest care and concern delivering him night and day from the mischievous attempts of the Powers of darkness.

Thus I have done with the first thing I proposed, having abundantly shewn, that all these Attributes, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, Infinite Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, do inseparably belong to the Divine Nature, and consequently that God is both able, and also willing to preside over us. I now proceed to confirm and establish the same Truth by some few Arguments, which (as I said before) do not suppose, but necessarily and unavoidably conclude too for his Being.

1. Then, that there is some Great, Invisible Being, who by his infinite Wisdom and Almighty Power presides over, and governs all things both in Heaven and Earth, will abundantly appear to any Man, who shall stand still a while, and contemplate the wide Theatre of the World, and impartially survey the several parts of the Creation. The Greatness and Beauty of the Creatures will render the Creator proportionably visible, and the operations of subordinate Agents lead us to a clear acknowledgment of the first supreme Mover. Ask the Heavens, and

they will witness; the Celestial Bodies, and they will declare his Wisdom. How comes the Sun to move by an oblique Circle, when his Journey would be more easie and compendious through the *Æquator*, if an overruling Providence has not so wisely ordered his motion, that he may in their due seasons dispense his benign and comfortable influence to all parts of the World, and yet not inflame the Earth by his too near approaches? Who commandeth the Morning, and causeth the Day-spring to know his place? Who hath so regularly distinguish'd the Vicissitudes of Light and Darkness, and so orderly constituted the different seasons of the Year? Who hath appointed the Moon for certain seasons, and brings her out with her glorious train to illuminate the Earth, lest primitive Darkness entirely blot out the Light, and so regaining its lost Empire, sit brooding with all its attendant horrors upon the face of the whole Earth? Who hath given the Pole-star for a Guide to the Mariner, and so excellently qualify'd the different and unequal motions of the Stars and Planets, that though they never go together, yet they never interrupt or hinder one another in their courses, but constantly move each in its order and season? Can any thing less, than an Almighty Arm, bind the sweet influences of *Pleiades*, or loose the bands of *Orion*? Or
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any thing less, than infinite Wisdom, bring forth *Mazaroth* in his season, and guide *Arcturus* with his Sons? *Epicurus* his God indeed, as * *Maximus Tyrius* well observes, was rather like a *Sardapalus*, than a Deity; so delicate, tender, soft, and effeminate, that the least thought of business would disturb his brain, and marr all his Felicity; τὸ ἀδυνάτον, says he, ἔτ' αὐτὸ πρᾶγματ' ἔχει, ἔτ' ἄλλω παρέχει. The Immortal Being neither hath any business himself, nor creates any to others. And thus having discarded his God both from creating and minding the World, from *Leucippus* and *Democritus* (as they from the *Phœnician Mochus*) he fondly conceited, that all this Beauty and Regularity in the motions of the Heavenly Bodies, and their immediate subserviency to the use of Mankind, could, without the contrivance of any Superiour, Immaterial Agent, be the natural result of homogeneous matter fortuitously jumbled together. But how unworthy these sentiments are of the refin'd Spirit of a Philosopher, is sufficiently evident from the common Principles of natural Reason it self. For every part of this beauteous frame, bears the fairest and largest characters of the greatest Wisdom and Goodness as can be imagin'd, so that the Atheist himself does not think much to grant, that he cannot see,

how things could have been better ordered, though God himself should indeed have contriv'd them. But could chance be the cause of this fair, this excellent effect, wherein we can discover no blot nor mistake, but all the various parts are so excellently adapted to their particular uses, and yet with so much order and regularity rendered subservient to one another, that the whole is nothing else, but a perfect pattern of beauty and proportion? Suppose the Brute matter being set in motion by the Eternal Mind, (as our Neotericks would have it) should at length, after infinite circumgyrations, applications, attritions, adhesions, and complications of it self in an immense space, amount to some more rude and imperfect delineations of nature; yet is it possible we should imagine, that the particles of it could ever fall into that exact form, order, motion, and serviceableness to the World, which the Heavenly Bodies are in, unless manag'd and dispos'd by Divine Wisdom and Counsel? As well may we conclude, that the *Mausoleum*, the Pyramids of *Egypt*, or any other stately structure we ever heard of in the World, were never contriv'd and erected by the mechanical wit of Man, but that the Iron, Stones, Timber, and all the other materials, playing and toying up and down without any care or thought, did upon a time very
fortu-

fortunately meet together, and after several trials and encounters on all sides, at last so happily hit upon one anothers humours and dispositions, that of their own accord, without the counsel or contrivance of any Intelligent Being, they (combin'd together, and settled themselves in those Beautiful and Magnificent Structures so famous throughout the World. I am sure the greatest Speculatists of all Ages, whose enlarged Souls lov'd frequently to ascend into these outer Courts of Heaven, were always of this mind, amongst whom the judicious Roman Orator in particular was so deeply affected with the sense of these things, that he thought 'twas impossible for a Man seriously to contemplate the elegance and accurate order of them, and not plainly discern in them the Providence of God.

Quid potest esse tam apertum, * says he, *támque perspicuum, cùm cælum suspeximus,*

* De Nat. Deor. Lib. 2.

cælestiaque contemplati sumus, quàm esse aliquod numen præstantissimæ mentis, quo hæc regantur? And again as emphatically in the

close of his second Book *de Divinatione: Esse præstantem aliquam, Æternámque Naturam, & eam suspiciendam admirandámque hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi, ordóque rerum Cælestium cogit confiteri:* That there is some most Excellent and Eternal Nature, which ought to be honoured and admired by

Mankind, the Beauty of the World, and the order of the Heavenly Lights compell us to confels : Nay that great stickler for *Epicurus*, † *Lucretius* himself, was so † *Lib. 15.* stagger'd at the contemplation of all this order and regularity in the motions of the Heavenly Bodies, that he was forc'd to lay aside the peremptory, dogmatical humour of his monopolizing sect, and to resolve all his search and enquiry into these matters into a puny, precarious *may be*, which too, and that very often scarce stands within the comprehensive bounds of possibility. And you know 'twas the same consideration, that induc'd not only the ignorant and vulgar, who generally judge of things by their senses, but also the most learn'd, ingenious, and contemplative Philosophers, the *Zabii* amongst the *Chaldæans*, the *Hierogrammatists* amongst the *Egyptians*, the *Magi* amongst the *Persians*, the *Gymnosophists* amongst the *Indians*, the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists* amongst the *Greeks*, to worship them for Gods.

But let us descend a while from these bright Mansions of day, and we shall find, that even this lower World does not lie in so much darkness and obscurity, but that here also we see such palpable evidences of his Being and Providence, that though *Abraham* be ignorant of us, and *Israel* acknowledge

knowledge us not; yet surely He is, as *Plato* speaks, Πάτερ Πάντων, as well as Ποιητής the Father and Governour of all things, as well as the Maker of them; Our Deliverer, our Guardian, our Preserver, and that in Him we live, and move, and have our very Beings. Who can walk through the liquid and spacious Plains of the Air, seriously considering the admirable temperature of that Element, and not trace the Footsteps of Providence in each Particle of it? What, but an All-wise Agent, who takes care for the welfare of his Creatures, could so admirably adapt and accommodate it to the great ends of the Creation, making it the treasury of vital breath, without which we should immediately relapse into our original dust? Who bringeth the Winds out of his Treasures, to dissipate noisome and contagious Vapours, lest stagnating in the Air they should by their corrupt tabisick matter occasion many diseases in Animals, and also by their cool refreshing breezes; to temper and allay the scorching Beams of the Meridian Sun in such Regions, which otherwise through the extremity of heat would faint and languish near the Æquator? Who by the same officious Ministers bringeth the Cloud over the Earth, to cause it to rain on the dry and parched ground? Or who with moderate and gentle show'rs impregnates the Womb

Womb of the Earth, and causeth the bud of the tender Herb to spring forth? Again, who hath laid up the Waters, as it were in a Treasure-house, not suffering their wet, liquid Particles to be mingled with the dry ones of the Earth, lest the whole should become one uninhabitable Quagmire? What but an Universal Principle of Wisdom and Counsel, has rendred this vast and wide Ocean, contrary to the nature of many other Waters, of so thick a consistency, that 'tis admirably fitted and dispos'd for the mutual commerce of one Nation with another? Or what, but such a Being causeth it constantly to observe its ebbs and flows, its Spring and Nepe-tides, and yet still to retain its saltness so convenient for the maintenance of its Inhabitants? What, but Omnipotence, could fetter and shackle this murmuring, restless, unruly Element; shut its fury in with Bars and Doors, and curb the insolence of its proud swelling waves only with reins of sand? Who, but He, silenceth the raging tempest, commands the fighting Winds to leave off their contentions, and snatcheth the Mariner, when at his wits end, from the devouring jaws of the Deep; after all gently waisting him to the Haven, where he would be? If those Men, who confin'd the Providence of God to the narrower limits of the Heavenly Spheres, had ever gone
down

down to the Sea in Ships, and occupy'd their business in those great Waters, I doubt they would soon have been of another mind, and have confess'd, that his Wonders were to be seen too in the Deep.

But we need neither contemplate the simple and uniform lustre of the prime essential Glory, variously reflected in the dazzling splendors and brightness of the Heavenly Bodies, nor yet search the bottom of the Deep, if happily we may find him there: For do not even the Wilderness and the solitary places rejoyce with joy and singing; and the beauty and usefulness, the variety and convenience of the Hills and Dales, of the Mountains and Valleys, of the Groves and Forests declare the Glory of the Lord, and the Excellency of our God? Who can silently consider, that the same cold insipid mass of Earth, which (as Mr. † *Treat. Of the Wisdom of God in the Creation.* Ray discourseth) is grateful to no sense, and in all appearance destitute of any warmth or prolifick vertue, should produce Trees and Plants, Herbs and Flowers, so various in their shape and colour, so refreshing in their odours, so fragrant in their smell, so medicinal in their vertue, so beneficial in their uses, of so lovely and harmonious a beauty, and affecting all our senses with wonder and delight. That Springs and Fountains, Brooks and Rivers,
Lakes

Lakes and standing Pools of water should be scatter'd and dispers'd all the Earth over, which otherwise in some parts, as in *Egypt* and *India*, would be utterly destitute and void of Inhabitants. That springs should break forth on the sides of Mountains most remote from the Sea ; and hidden, undiscerned ways be made for Rivers, through Straits, and Rocks, and Subterraneous Vaults, as though nature had cut them on purpose to derive the Water, which else would overflow and drown whole Countries : That the Water thus passing through the veins of the Earth should be rendred fresh and potable, which yet we cannot effect by any percolations ; the saline particles passing even through a ten-fold filtre. That in some places there should spring forth metallick and mineral Waters, and hot Baths, and these so constant and permanent for many Ages, and so convenient for divers Medicinal intentions and uses ; the Causes of which things, or the means and methods, by which they are perform'd, have not been as yet certainly discover'd. Who, I say, can seriously consider all this, and not gratefully acknowledge, that they are the gracious and miraculous effects of infinite Counsel and Understanding ? Again, do not all the various kinds of Creatures, that move upon the face of the Earth, tell us that He is here, and

and direct us by their wonderful Operations to his Wisdom and Goodness? How naturally doth every Animal seek the preservation of its Species, and choose as fit and proper means for the attainment of its end, as it could do, if it had a rational intelligent Soul? How with no less various, than curious arts do the Birds interweave and plat their Nests to hatch their young ones in? And the Ant, (as all Naturalists agree) and the Squirrel (as is observ'd by the very Vulgar, who frequently pillage its hoards of nuts) providently lay up their treasure against the time of extremity? Nay, how do the first of these, though they bring but one morsel of meat at a time, and have not fewer perhaps than seven or eight young in the nest together, which at the return of their Dams do all at once with equal greediness hold up their heads, and gape for that morsel, as though they were really able judiciously to distinguish, and count their number, not omit or forget one of them, but feed them all? With what resolution as well as tenderness do the Creatures cherish and foster their Young, the very weakest and most timorous of them, such as Hens and Geese, shewing in their defence so much bravery and courage, as even contrary to the motions of sense, and the instinct of self-preservation, to encounter all manner of dangers to preserve

serve them from harm? 'Twould be no less pleasant than profitable, to run through the several Classes of Animals, and observe what wonderful methods they all at other times use for their own preservation. The *Cretian* Goats, as † *Tully* observes are no
 † *De Nat. Deor. l. 2.* sooner wounded with poysoned darts, but, as though their own counsel and experience directed them, they incontinently fly to the Herb *Dictamnus*, whose wonderful vertue immediately works the arrows out of their Bodies, and heals up the wound; and the Fish, call'd therefore *Sepia*, (says the same Author) as soon as pursu'd by the Fishermen, blackens the water with her Blood, and so makes her escape. The Lamb, as most Naturalists take it for granted, will immediately acknowledge the Wolf its Enemy, though it never saw one before; and we daily see, that Poultry, Partridges, and other Birds at the first sight know Birds of prey, and make sign of it by a peculiar note of their voice to their Young, who thereupon presently secure and hide themselves. Nay, natural Agents themselves act as constantly for wise and good ends, as these great Receptacles and Habitations of sense. They neglect their private Good and proper Ends, to maintain and promote the publick Good of the Universe. Thus the Waters ascend upwards, the Fire downward
 against

against Nature, to prevent any Chasm in the compages of the Universe; and every natural Body will rend and burst in pieces, rather than the order of the World should be violated by a penetration of dimensions. But can all this be the production of blind chance or necessity, or rather the miraculous effects of infinite Goodness and Understanding? *Ob Finem agere*, says the learned † *Grotius*, *non est nisi intelligentis Naturæ*: To act for some end is the incommunica-

‡ *De veritat. Relig. Christ.*
l. 1. c. 7.

ble property of an intelligent Being. Since then both natural and sensitive Agents act constantly for some end, and yet (as appears from their always repeating the same things exactly in the same method, without ever trying any new experiments, and their ineptitude to other concerns of no greater moment) cannot be directed in their operations by any counsel of their own; (This being a plain and evident token, that they cannot do otherwise, and consequently that they act, not from Reason, but purely from necessity) since, I say, they act with greater Reason, than what they are capable of learning by imitation or instruction, we must of necessity conclude, that there is some invisible, high and over-ruling Wisdom, who by his impression directs them as naturally to their proper ends, as the impression

pression of the Archers hand drives the arrow towards the mark ; so that, as the

† Orator speaks, he can by no means deserve the name of a Man
 † *Cicero de Legib. lib. 2.*

(of a rational, thinking, intelligent Being) who after a due consideration of all these things, can still profess his ignorance of that All-wise Being, who so excellently ordereth and disposeth them.

But to come nearer home, whence has Man his Title of Sovereignty over his Fellow Creatures, or who hath given him this Charter of Universal, unlimited Empire ? All the Creatures do obeisance to him, and in their several stations pay Him constant service. Some of them furnish his Table with food and delicacies, others kindly prevent or remove his Diseases by their medicinal Vertues. Some cloath and adorn his Body, others assist him in, and ease him of his labours. Nay there are some, which seem to have been created for no other end, than his sport and recreation ; and if any turn Rebels, and disown his Authority, they as conscious of their guilt, immediately fly his Court, and betake themselves to the Wilderness. Nay, though some so far forget their allegiance, as to become cruel and noxious to him they should obey ; yet others on the contrary bear him such good will and affection, that to save him the trouble

trouble of entering the lists himself, they bravely fight his Battels, breathing continual defiance against these Enemies of their Lord. Thus the Horse is a virulent enemy to the Bear, the Dolphin to the Crocodile, the Elephant to the Dragon, and the Lizard to the Serpent. Now did his own strength or policy thus bring Dominion to him, or his own right arm obtain him this victory? His might is vastly inferior to that of many Creatures, and 'tis impossible his Reason could ever implant so much awe, and dread of him upon such, as never experienc'd it. Doubtless then his Power is deriv'd from some other Being, that is both stronger and wiser than himself and his Fellow Creatures, and that other being can be none but God.

Again, let a Man contemplate the structure of his own Body, and he will see so plain an inscription of Providence in each member of it, that he will be forc'd to say of it, what *Heraclitus* once did of his Stove; *Etiam hic Dii sunt*, Here also is that infinitely Wise and Powerful God, who ordereth all things in the World according to the counsel of his own will. For not to examine the infinite variety, delicate smallness, exquisite shape, position, and temper of the parts of this wondrous contrivance, and how they all unanimously serve their several ends: The admirable configuration of the parts of

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the

the Embryo in the dark recesses of the matrix without any care of the Parent, and the conveyance of its nourishment through the *Vasa Umbilicalia* : The natural closing up of those vessels upon the Birth of the Child, when it is to receive its nutriment another way, are full, pregnant, and uncontrollable demonstrations of a Providence. Such Knowledge indeed is too wonderful and excellent for the groveling Atomist, and has in all Ages miserably detected the weakness of the unthinking injudicious Epicurean; but to unprejudiced Men it has read continual Lectures of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, and also from profane irreligious Persons extorted this confession ; that God had fashion'd them behind and before, and that therefore they were fearfully and wonderfully made. Thus † *Galen*, who was

† *Lib. 3. de
usu Partium*

no great Friend to Religion, observing that there was nothing in an Human Body, either superfluous or defective, nothing rude, unpolish'd, imperfect, or irregular ; but that all, even its most minute, inconsiderable parts were so curiously adapted to their particular uses, and yet so wisely and regularly administred to the supply of the whole, that the whole frame was nothing else but perfect elegance and beauty, the most accurate order and exactest symmetry imaginable, was wound up to
such

such an extatick admiration of the Wisdom, that contriv'd it, that after he had long rack'd and tortur'd his brains to find (if possible) some way or other to evade this confession, he at last entirely over-born with the presence of so evident and undeniable a truth, broke out into this rapturous expression: *Compono hic profectò Canticum in Creatoris nostri laudem, qui ultrò res suas ornare voluit melius, quàm ullà arte possent.* Here in truth do I compose an Hymn in praise of our Creator, who of his own free Goodness has been pleas'd to adorn and beautifie his Creatures, beyond what either Art or Wit can imitate or imagine: And for the same reason some † Philosophers have been induc'd to believe, that every particular part of a Man's Body, had a particular Genius or good Angel to superintend it.

† *Vide Orig. cont. Cels. l. 8. p. 416. Jamblisch de Myster. Egypt. § 3. cap. 16.*

Lastly, If from the Body we appeal unto the Soul, we shall find, that from premises granted by the Atheist himself, she will so clearly and undeniably conclude too for a Providence, that as * *Lactantius* observes, he can by no means deserve the title of Rational, who is ignorant of God, the great Parent of his Soul. For why does not the Needle more naturally turn towards its beloved North,

* *Institut. l. 5. c. 9.*

nor the Heliotrope more zealously affect the Kisses of the rising Sun, then the Soul of Man, especially when by often reflecting upon her own excellencies she has disdainfully shaken off those plummets, which sink her down into matter, dilating and spreading her self boundlessly beyond the utmost sphere of Finite Beings, points with her full bent and verticity to the Fruition of some Infinite Good, as to the only centre, whereon she can finally rest? We find by experience, that these noble intelligent Creatures are too large for the Circle and Embraces of Nature; aspiring above the gratifications of sense and materiality, to the everlasting possession of a Spiritual and Immortal Blessedness. They can indeed refresh themselves with the excellency of the Creatures, and discover such variety of sweetness and beauty in their natures, as will plentifully entertain them with delightful speculations. But for pure rest and peace, for plenary acquiescence and termination of desires, 'tis nowhere, I say, to be found within the whole Latitude of the Creation. The Depth saith, it is not in me; and the Sea saith it is not in me, so that though our perverse Wills should pursue their beloved Prey through all the vast Wilderness of the World, and force our enslav'd Understandings to follow the chase with them, yet after all their toil and labour they

they must at last sit down weary and dissatisfy'd, find themselves poor and indigent in the midst of all their Enjoyments, and weep with the insatiable *Macedon*, because they cannot find a World, some solid and substantial Happiness, which may fill the utmost capacity of their craving appetites, and refresh them with an inexhaustible spring of uninterrupted delights. But whence is it, I ask again, that our Souls have these capacious, these dilated desires; unless there is some Being of such ample, copious, and solid excellence, as may answer to the full extent of them? Some object within the Latitude of its Entity proportionable for them to fix and bottom upon? That is in other terms, unless there be a God and Providence? Again, whence is it, that the Dread of some great, invisible Power, and the anxious expectation of a judgment to come, are so twisted and interwoven with our very Beings, that (notwithstanding the triumphant Shoutings, Poetical Rants, and noise Acclamations of the jolly and over-flush'd † Champion of *Epicurus* to the contrary) the acutest

† *Lucretius*
Lib. 1.

Atheist with all his arts and reasonings could never totally erase them; but that, in spite of all his disputings to the contrary, they still revive and awake, as soon as the Clouds begin to thicken, and the Face of the Sky

to grow black? We daily see, that neither Hope nor Fear, neither Love nor Hatred, nor any other Passion is in vain, so much as in Brutes; but that all their several instincts and affections have real Objects in nature corresponding to them. Can we then suppose, that the Object of Man's dread alone hath no real existence; but that he naturally trembles at an invisible Nothing; and is horribly afraid of the shadow of an Imagination? This would be to render him with all his Reason the most contemptible and ridiculous Creature upon the face of the Earth, and to set him in a Class, even below the Ape, that looks pale, and flies away from the sight of a Snail. Certainly then, as the Divine † Moralist speaks, our Maker has imprinted these common notions upon us, that they may infallibly lead us to the knowledge of himself.

† *Hierocles*
in *aur. Car.*
pag. 282.

Some, I know, endeavour to evade the force of this argument, by telling us, that if these things were indeed Natural and Essential to the Soul, they would be Universal, and every where equally receiv'd. But some People, say they, have been discover'd, which have neither any sense of a Deity, nor Forms of Religious Worship; such are the *Cannibals* in *America*, and the *Inhabitants* of *Seldania* in *Africk*. Nay more, even some

some of the Sons of Learning and Wisdom have been famous for the same Principles, utterly excluding the object of Religion out of the World.

Now to answer directly to this objection, be pleas'd to consider with me, that as for the first part of it, *viz.* That there are some People in *America* and *Soldania*, who profess no Religion at all, it is entirely false. The thoughts indeed of these People are low and groveling, and, like Frogs not yet perfected out of the mud of *Nile*, their better half sticks close to their Mother Earth. Their notions are poor, ignoble, and altogether unworthy of the exalted excellency of the Divine Nature; but yet we are assur'd by *Vossius* from a *Polonian* Gentleman, who was among them, that even in these decays and ruines of Human Reason, there still appear some sparks and glimmerings of Divine Truth, whilst the wildest and most barbarous amongst them are not destitute of Religious Rites and Ceremonies, but after the way, which they receiv'd from their Fathers, continue to worship their Idols or false Gods. *Etiam si ignorant*, as *Tully* speaks of some such People in his days, *qualem habere Deum deceant, tamen habendum sciunt*, so that *Epicurus* his *πρόληψις*, or Notion of a Deity antecedent to all Arts and Sciences, and consequently

*De Legib.
Lib. 1.*

quently Natural and Essential to the Soul, shines even upon the minds of *these* Men in the glorious displays of its native Lustre and Brightness.

But if we should grant, that (as our Adversaries will have it) this part of the Objection is indeed true, *i. e.* that these *Americans* and *Soldanians* have really no apprehensions of any thing above themselves, but live securely without any thought either of a God or Providence in the World; yet (whatever they think on't) 'tis most evident at first sight, that neither this so indulgent a concession will, though they make the most of it, do us any prejudice at all. For how can it possibly shake or undermine the foundation of our Argument, which is rais'd upon the natural constitution of Mankind, when there has not been so much force and violence done to the natural Faculties, as to put them entirely out of course, when 'tis related by the very same Historians they quote, that these *Cannibals* and *Soldanians* are so wild and savage, so barbarous, stupid, and sottishly ignorant, that they seem to retain nothing of Men besides the external shape, being as to their Intellectuals almost wholly degenerated into the Nature of Brutes? If a Man may lawfully take his measures from such a company of People as these, and upon the bare Authority of such profound Theorists

Theorists run counter to the inquisitive, learn'd, and judicious Personages of all Ages, (which we shall shew by and by to have all concurr'd in their acknowledgment of a God and Providence.) He may for the same reason be allow'd to conclude, that there is no such thing as Reason, because Mad-men and Idiots have little or no share of it, and that Light and Colours are pure Figments and Chimæra's, because some with *Democritus* have put out their eyes, and cannot see them. He may fairly and reasonably deny, that Honey is sweet, because a sick palate can't relish and taste it, and that the members of Beasts are ever regular and uniform, because the womb of nature is sometimes distorted through monstrous Productions. But the Wiser Heathen has taught us long since, *Quod specimen Naturæ cujuslibet à naturâ optimâ sumendum est*, that the Essay of any kind is not to be taken from By-blows and such like, but always from the best and most usual part of it ; so that if (indulging, I say, our Adversaries this first part of their objection) we can but shew, that this Doctrine of a God and Providence, has been constantly maintain'd by the unanimous suffrage of the Learn'd and Thinking of all Ages, we may safely conclude, that either the *Idea* of such an over-ruling Being is indelibly written and engraven upon the Soul,

Soul, and so congenial or con-natural to it, or (which is all one) that upon a due exercise of her natural Faculties, she is necessarily and unavoidably lead to the acknowledgment of such a Being.

And now that it has been thus generally acknowledg'd, I think we have little or no reason to doubt ; For to speak freely on my own part, I must needs confess, that I could never yet prevail with my self to believe, that there was ever any such thing, as a speculative Atheist in the World. Such a one I mean, who after a fair hearing of his Reason, and a long, serious, and impartial study in the Book of Nature, could retain his infidelity, and at last seriously write Atheist. And this I therefore say, because, as the School-men judiciously determine, 'tis equally impossible, that our Intellect should be invincibly ignorant of this Truth, which is written in such fair and large characters, if not upon the tables of our hearts, yet certainly upon every leaf of the Book of Nature, that 'tis to our understanding, what the light of the Sun is to our eyes, the first, and the plainest, and the most glorious object of it, as 'tis that our Touch should not perceive the Fire to be hot, when we put our hand into it. And also because I could never yet meet with any instance in History, that could convince me, that I am here
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in an error. For as for those instances of Learned Men, such as *Diagoras*, *Theodorus*, *Protagoras*, and a few others, who (as our Adversaries object) were anciently look'd upon as rank, Profess'd Atheists, I cannot conceive, why they should be branded with so ignominious a Character. Their generous, unprejudic'd way of Philosophizing deserves a better name; and I am apt to believe, were their Cause fairly heard, the impartial Judges of Reason and Learning would acquit them rather with applause and acclamations, than prosecute them (as some blind and ignorant Zealots have done) with hard censures and uncharitable surmises. For that they were really far enough remov'd from the confines of Atheism, properly so call'd, will appear more than probable, if we never so little reflect upon the unhappy constitution of the times they liv'd in. 'Twas, you know, when all, that was truly sacred and Religious, had almost bid a final adieu to the Habitations of Men, and fled back with sorrowful wings to its primitive and uncorrupted Mansions above. Men, and those too of no ordinary Parts and Improvements, took up with low, unmanly Opinions, some of them (as you have seen) Deifying the inanimate Host of Heaven, and others out of a fond and obstinate partiality to their lusts and affections, making the

Deity

Deity strike fail to their corrupted Humors. The Poets by their leud and scandalous Fables, had rendred the Vulgar Deities vain, loose, and contemptible, and by ascribing human passions and exorbitancies to their Gods, and so filling Heaven it self with all the enormities of the vilest Debauchery, had infinitely scandaliz'd the minds of thinking Men. Upon this the Stoicks and other dogmatical Writers (not only after Christianity came into the World, when they were pressed with these villainous and shameful Stories of their Gods, as || *Eusebius*,

|| *Pr. Ev.*

L. 3. c. 6.

* *Cont. Cels.*

L. 3. p. 123.

† *De Nat.*

Deor. L. 2.

c. 24. Edit.

Lond.

and before him * *Origen* would have it ; but also, as † *Tully* demonstrates from the examples of *Zeno*, *Cleanthes*, and *Chrysippus*, long before the time of its appearance) took great pains for the credit of the Divine Nature to mysticize these loose and extravagant Writers ; and others both by sober and serious Arguments, and likewise by jeers and scoffs, cutting satire, and biting sarcasms, endeavour'd all they could, to explode and whip these Poetical Deities out of the World. What wonder therefore, if not only by the unthinking, superstitious Multitude, but also by those learned Men themselves, who really thought them to be Gods, such Persons were ordinarily look'd upon as Profane, Irreligious, and

and Atheistical ? This, we are sure, was the case of *Anaxagoras*, who is accus'd by *Plato* himself for debauching the minds of the young Gentlemen of *Athens* with Atheistical Principles, only because he deny'd the Sun and Moon to be Gods: And 'twas no otherwise with *Socrates*, who, as he tells us himself in *Plato's Euthyphro*, was arraign'd and condemn'd to death for no other reason, but because he theologiz'd freely and boldly, not fearing publickly to declare his dislike of those vile, unworthy stories, which Poets and Painters commonly imputed to the Gods. And for all our Objectors can alledge to the contrary, this too was the very case of all our other reputed Atheists : So that upon the whole you see, that we have no reason at all to condemn these Learned Men for Atheists, and consequently that neither this second part of the Objection, does any thing enervate the force of our Argument.

But suppose we should likewise indulge our Adversaries this part of their Objection, and allow, that some Learned Men did really and in good earnest profess an entire disbelief of a God and Providence in general ; yet neither will this concession do us any disservice at all. For can it be thought a greater prejudice to the standing Laws of Nature, that there should be Monsters amongst

mongst us in respect of our Minds, than 'tis, that there are such in respect of their Bodies? Monsters, I say, and that not without reason; for that they must really have been such, Men of distorted thoughts and unnatural imaginations, may be sufficiently evinc'd in that the Opinions of the fore-cited Learned Men, being look'd upon as purely Atheistical, were no sooner broach'd, and sent abroad, but that they were universally rejected and detested by all, and the Authors of them persecuted and devoted unto death, as the noisom and pestilential corruption of Human Reason. For certainly that opinion, which is universally rejected, can never be the Off-spring of right Reason, which is common to all, but must needs owe its Birth either to a deprav'd, corrupted intellect, or at least to an unaccountable affectation of singularity, such as He was famous for, who contrary to the evidence of sense taught snow to be black.

Having thus clear'd the way by shewing the weakness and invalidity of each part of this objection, I now proceed in the

Second place more explicitly to confirm and establish this Truth, by the unanimous suffrage and concurrent Testimony of all Nations in the World. And indeed if we consult the Records of the first and best Ages of the World, when Men together with the purest

purest air imbib'd also the purest Principles, we shall not find so much as one distorted member, one prodigious Birth, one single, individual Person amongst all the ancient Nations, who doubted either of the Being of God, or call'd his Providence in question. Though the God of this World had so blinded their understandings, that the true and genuine Light of uncorrupted Truth could not break in upon them ; yet even in this dismal night of Ignorance and Darkness, this Labyrinth of errors and misery, they were naturally carried by the clew of their Meditations to the knowledge of some Supreme Governour, some first mover, as *Aristotle* speaks, which gave Life, Breath, and Motion to all things in the World. We read indeed of some rude and savage People, who, as though they had the mark of *Cain* itamp'd upon them, liv'd like Vagabonds and Fugitives, without Cities, Houses, or any thing of Literature or Civil Polity among them : But yet we never hear of any, who did not desire, as the *Jews* love to speak, to be gather'd under the Wings of the Divine Majesty, and to enjoy the happy Privilege of his immediate Protection. Rather than seem debarr'd of this inestimable Blessing, they would carry their Idols about with them in Carts, and that they might not be entic'd away by the enchantments of their Enemies,

bind

bind their very Gods in Chains, and their Deities in links of Iron. In short, they were not more divided from one another by Seas, Mountains, and Desarts, than united and made one by this unanimous testimony. For the Author of the Book *de Mundo*, (who, for all I yet see, was no other, than the fore-cited Philosopher himself) assures us, that Ἀρχαῖοι μὲν τις λόγος καὶ πατριός ἐστι πάντων ἀνθρώπων and so on. 'Tis a very ancient Tradition, convey'd down to all sorts of Men from their Progenitors or Fore-fathers, that all things are from God, and that by Him they all subsist, and that no nature is of it self sufficient to preserve it self, if left alone and destitute of the Divine Influence and Assistance. Which assertion is likewise confirm'd by the concurrent testimony of

* *Max. Tyrius*, who declares, that
 * *Dissert. I.* though in other things Men very much differ'd from one another, yet all throughout the whole World, Learn'd and Unlearn'd, Wise and Unwise, agreed in this, unanimously acknowledging one Supreme God, the King and Father of all things in the World. Ἐν τούτῳ δὲ πολέμῳ, καὶ σάσῃ, καὶ διαφωνίᾳ, ἓνα ἴδδεις ἂν ἐν πάσῃ γῇ ὁμόφωνον νόμον καὶ λόγον, ὅτι θεὸς εἰς πάντων βασιλεὺς καὶ πατήρ. But in all this contention, strife, and discord, says he, you may find every where throughout the whole World one
 consen-

consentient or agreeing Law and Assertion,
 That there is one God, the King and Father
 of All. And *Proclus* upon *Plato's Timæus* ;
 τὴν πρωτίστην ἀρχὴν, says he, πᾶσαι θεοποιεῖται
 καὶ αἰρέσεις συγχωρεῖσιν εἶναι, καὶ θεὸν πάντες ἀνθρώ-
 ποι ἐπικαλεῖσθαι βοηθόν. All Religions and Sects
 acknowledge that one Highest Principle of
 all, and all Men call upon God for their
 Helper. Now that these Learned Men did
 not over-hastily and imprudently take up
 things upon trust, but were certain and well
 assur'd of the truth of what they thus deliver,
 not only their great Abilities and known
 Characters in the World may incline us to
 believe, but likewise the best and most Au-
 thentick Historians, and also the Rites and
 known Customs of these Nations themselves
 put beyond all manner of distrust. For to
 begin with the *Chaldæans* : * *Dio-*
dorus Siculus assures us, that, tho' * *Lib. 3.*
 they asserted the Eternity of the *cap. 8.*
 World, yet they were far enough from be-
 ing Atheists, believing τὴν τοῦ ὅλων τάξιν καὶ
 διακόσμησιν ὅσα τι πρὸ νοῦ καὶ γινόμενα. that the
 order and disposition of the whole World is
 by a Divine Providence. And however
 their Idolatry hinted at by *Job*, in adoring
 the Sun in his Strength, and the Moon,
 when she walk'd in her Brightness : Their
 impious mode of Divination by their *Talis-*
mans, Figures not unlike the *Jewish Tera-*
phim,

phim, the Greeks Ἀγάλματα, and the *Popish* *Agnus Dei*: Their πυρραϊθεῖα, or Hearths, where they preserv'd their Eternal Fire, the Symbol of the Sun, with many other things of the same nature, shew their formal compliance with the Vulgar Polytheists: We find them in an Oracle, quoted by * *Eusebius* out of *Porphyry*, joyn'd with the *Hebrews*, as worshipping with them in an holy manner one self-existent Deity:

* *Pr. Ev. L.*
9. c. 10. *Vi-*
deas etiam
Gallæum,
qui ad Si-
byllinorum
calcem hoc
inter alia
oraculum
laudat.

Μᾶνοι χαλδαῖοι σφίλω λάχον, ἡδ' ἄρ' ἑβραῖοι,
αὐτογένεθλον ἀνακτα σεβάζόμενοι θεὸν ἀγνῶς.

And then for the *Egyptians*: 'Tis the Doctrine of the Father and Founder of all their Theology, *Trismegistus*, (if *Cedrenus* quotes him right) that there is one Infinite, Supreme, Eternal Being, who as he created all things, so he still continues to preserve, support, and uphold them all. Ἐκτὸς τῶτος, says he, ἐκ Ἀγγέλων, ἔκ Δαίμωνων, ἐκ ὧσιν τις ἄλλη, πλυντων γὰρ Κύριον, καὶ θεός, καὶ Πατήρ, καὶ πάντα ὑπ' αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰσιν. i. e. Neither good nor bad Angels, nor any other Essence is without him, for He is Lord of All, the God and Father of All, and by him, and in him do all things subsist. Now though *Cedrenus* possibly gather'd this from some other Ancient Historian, rather than from *Hermes* himself,

himself, yet we are sure, that 'tis really
 ἡρόα ἑρμαϊκά an Hermaical Opinion, or the
Egyptian Doctrine: For notwithstanding
 the outward compliance likewise of these
 Men, with the multifarious Polytheism and
 Idolatry of the profane and ignorant Vul-
 gar, we are certify'd by *Origen*, *Porphry*,
 and *Jamblichus*, (the last of which especial-
 ly was most intimately acquainted with their
 mysterious Rites) that in their Arcane and
 Recondite Theology, which was commu-
 nicated only to their Kings and Priests; they
 did acknowledge one Supreme, Independ-
 ent, Self-subsisting Being, who created all
 the Powers of Heaven, whom he employs
 as his Deputies and Vice-gerents to preside
 over, and take care of the several parts of
 the Universe. And accordingly in their Hie-
 roglyphicks, or sacred Symbols they repre-
 sented him by a Scepter with an Eye in it,
 signifying thereby, says † *Plu-*
tarch, that he both sees and go-
 verns all things. Nay this Philo-
 sopher is so far from endeavouring
 to prove this Fundamental truth, that
 throughout that whole Book *de Iside & Osi-*
ride, he takes it for a thing granted and ac-
 knowledg'd on all hands. Thus in the be-
 ginning of it: The end of all Religious
 Rites and Mysteries of that *Egyptian* God-
 dess *Isis*, says he, was ἡ τῶ πρῶτος, καὶ κυρία,

† *Lib. de*
Isid. & Osi-
rid. p. 371.

καὶ νοῦτος γνῶσις· the Knowledge of that first
 Being, who is the Lord of all things, and
 intelligible only by the Mind :
 † *Page* 381. And then † afterwards he tells us,
 that they therefore worship'd him symboli-
 cally in the Crocodile, because that Animal
 alone being without a Tongue, was look'd
 upon as a very apt Resemblance and Imita-
 tion of him, φωνῆς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς λόγῳ ἀπερ-
 ρεῖς ἐστὶ, καὶ δι' ἀλόφου βαίνων κελύθεα, καὶ δίκης
 τὰ θνητὰ ἀγὰ καὶ δίκῃ. For the Divine
 Reason having no need of Speech, and wal-
 king silently and without noise throughout
 the World, governs and disposeth all hu-
 mane Affairs according unto Right. *Or-*
pheus, who certainly (for here I must beg
 leave with all due respects to dissent from
 some eminent Philologers of later times,
 who look upon the whole History of him on-
 ly as a mere Romantick Allegory, utterly
 devoid of all truth and reality) first brought
 the Rites of Religion into *Greece*, exactly
 treads in their steps, for in his Hymn to *Mu-*
sæus (which some erroneously think him to
 have compil'd in opposition to his other sup-
 pos'd Polytheistical Writings) having first
 asserted the Unity of the God-head, he shews
 at large the extent of his Dominion and So-
 veraignty ; telling us, that he is the cause of
 all the Miseries and Calamities Men suffer in
 the World, and that there is no evil (of Pu-
 nishment,

nishment, (I suppose, he means) in the City, which the Lord has not done. That he both made, and also preserveth all things by his great Power and out-stretched Arm. That his Dominion is also in the Sea, and his Right-hand in the Floods. That though he dwelleth in the thick darkness, which no mortal Eye can approach, yet he invisibly walketh round the World, and observeth every thing that is done under the Sun. And lastly, that the glorious and invincible Legions of Angels, which stand about his Throne, are commission'd and sent out by him to take care of his Creatures here below. But if this Poem must be allow'd to be supposititious, (though I see no reason, why the whole of it should) made and father'd upon *Orpheus*; either, as *Vossius* thinks, by *Jews*; or by *Christians*, as others; yet that this in very deed was the Doctrine of this Great and Ancient Man, is probable from the Pythagorick and Platonick Theology, which (as *Porphyrius*, *Jamblichus*, *Syrrianus*, and *Proclus* unanimously inform us) was deriv'd in a very great measure from his Principles and Traditions, and also certain and indubitable from some Fragments of his acknowledg'd and cited by *Pagan* Writers themselves. For as I can hardly believe all that to be genuine or truly Orphical, that is, to have been written either by *Orpheus* him-

self, or some other ancient Heathen according to the *Oral Cabala*, or Tradition from him, which now goes under his name, so neither on the other hand, can I with any reason, upon *Herodotus's* single Authority, reject all that as spurious and supposititious, which in his own confession was by all the Learned and Ancient *Pagans* before his time, and we are sure by all since (*Aristotle* only excepted, who therefore embrac'd his solitary opinion, because contradictory to the *Pythagoræans* and *Platonists*) constantly acknowledg'd to be his. Thus then in some Verses of his quoted by *Proclus* upon the *Timæus* : The most High God, says he, is the First and the Last. All things were produc'd by him out of nothing, and he is above, and through them all. If you climb up into Heaven, He is there; if you go down into the profundity either of the Earth or Sea, He is there also. He giveth Life and Breath to all things, and from him they derive all their power and efficacy. The Sun, Moon, and Stars are in, and by Him; and he is that one Great King and Potentate, who Made and Governs all things both in Heaven and Earth. This Doctrine was afterwards embrac'd by all the succeeding *Greek Poets*, who are of any repute either for their Antiquity or Learning, out of every one of which might be cited several remarkable

able passages to this purpose, had not the skilful collections of many excellent Pens rendred it altogether superfluous. From them therefore pass we on to the Ancient Philosophers, amongst whom I know not so much as one Sect, but what either generously declar'd, or one way or other betray'd their Belief of it. *Epicurus*, I know, with his Followers is generally thought to have deny'd it, and truly, I think, 'twould have been no great wonder if they had. For since there is no vice, as an ingenious and learned Author of our own observes, to which we are more universally obnoxious, than that of excessive fondness and partiality to our selves, which makes us too often dote upon the deformities, and even to idolize the vices of our own temper, how should we think it strange, if so soft and voluptuous a Sect, who delighted in nothing so much as the delicious entertainments of their debauched Senses, and the sinful Retirements of solitary Groves, and silent Gardens, should fancy their God to be altogether such a one as themselves, a Being wholly sequestred from action, and confin'd to an Extramundane Paradise, where he sat surrounded with all imaginable Pleasures, and lasciviously entertain'd with a constant succession of Maiden delights? What wonder, I say, was it for Men thus to think of their God, who

really judg'd this to be the very top of happiness, and who therefore would have liv'd no otherwise, had they been Gods themselves? Their *Lusts* and *Affections* induc'd them thus to corrupt and sophisticate their notions of God, and, like the *Ethiopians*, being black themselves, to represent the Deity too in the colour of their own complexions. But tho' 'twould have been no great Wonder, if *Epicurus* had really thus thought of the Deity, yet the case, I conceive, was quite otherwise with him. Whatever his Doctrine and pretences were, His actions sufficiently proclaim'd his Providence. We may justly invert that of *Tully*, and say of him, *verbis sustulit, re posuit Deos*, he weakly deny'd him in Words, whilst his actions and behaviour strongly asserted him. Whence else those fears and torments, those anxious and jealous thoughts, for which he was so remarkable? *Nec quenquam vidi*, says the fore cited Author of him, *qui magis ea, quæ timenda negaret, timeret, mortem dico, & Deos*. But if he had a full and abiding conviction upon his mind (as certainly were there no God, the most prejudic'd Person in the World might at length acquire) against the reality of a Providence, why did he so much dread it above all other Men? *Mentiuntur igitur*, as *Seneca* speaks, *qui dicunt se non sentire esse Deum*. They do but lye, and deal

deal treacherously, who say they believe there is no God. 'Tis their desire, but not their thoughts, and though they speak never so great swelling words against him, yet their actions will some time or other betray them, and either by running under the Bed, when it Thunders, as *Caligula*; or by dreading, as *Hobbs*, to walk alone in the dark; or by some other evidence of a slavish, unmanly Fear of him, God will extort from them an acknowledgment of his Providence. But we shall let these Men pass, having greater witnesses than they. The *Pythagorean*, *Cynick*, *Academick*, *Peripatetick*, and *Stoick* go hand in hand, and though Light and Darkness will as soon meet, and kindly embrace each other, as some of these Philosophers be ever united and reconcil'd in their other differences, yet here they lovingly come together, and centre in the same point. Witness *Plotin*, *Porphyry*, and *Plutarch*, who have written large Tracts upon this Subject, wherein they abundantly vindicate the Divine Wisdom and Justice from those malicious aspersions wicked Men cast upon it; proving beyond all contradiction that the Affairs of this World are manag'd and dispos'd by an All-wise Being, who superintends and takes care of every particular thing in the World; and though the Glow-worm of Human Reason cannot penetrate
into

into the depth of his Counfels, yet that 'tis highly unreasonable Men should cavil or repine at the seeming inequalities of his Dispensation, who cannot but steer all his actions by the unerring compass of Infinite Wisdom. Witness the *Stagyrite* himself, who, though (according to the Genius of the natural Philosopher) he sometimes seems to be no docter on a Deity, yet in his Book *de Mundo*, (which in † *Justin Martyr's* judgment is a most excellent compendium of all his Philosophy) he no less elegantly than truly tells us, that God is both the Father and Preserver of all things, and though the Heaven of Heavens be the peculiar habitation of his glorious Majesty, yet that his Paternal care and Providence extends it self to the utmost bounds of nature; moving, upholding, and disposing all things in the Earth, and Sea, and in all other places. In short, ὁπῶς ἐν νηὶ κυβερνήτης, ἐν ἄρματι ἡνίοχος, ἐν χορῶν ὁ κορυφαίος, ἐν πόλει δὲ νόμος, ἐν στρατοπέδῳ δὲ ἡγεμὼν, τῷ τοιοῦτος ἐν κόσμῳ says he, What a Pilot is to a Ship, a Charioteer to a Chariot, the Præcentor to a Quire, Law to a City, and a General to an Army, the same is God to the World. But, not to insist altogether upon the Authority of this excellent and (I think) Genuine, though by some suspected Book; 'tis undeniably evident from other Writings,

Writings; which all allow to be his, that *Laertius* has done this Philosopher great injustice, in telling us, that he confin'd the Providence of God to the Heavenly Regions, for in the 12th. of his *Metap. cap. 10.* he expressly declares, that the Divine Providence extends it self, even to every thing that creepeth upon the face of the Earth, to the Fowls of the Air, to the Fish of the Sea, and to whatsoever walketh through the paths of the Sea. Nay so self-evident and undeniable does this Philosopher think this Assertion, that he believes a Man must deny all his Senses, abjure his Reason and Understanding, and be degraded into the very lowest class of unthinking, unintelligent Beings, before he can be induc'd to call it into question; and therefore if any one should be so stupidly ignorant, as to profess his distrust of it, let him be urg'd to confess it, says he, *Argumento potius bacillino, quàm Philosophico*, rather with that of a good cudgel, than any other dispute. Witness lastly *Thales, Pythagoras, Antisthenes, Plato, Theophrastus, Zeno, Epictetus, Hierocles, Damascius*, and all those other great and learned Men, who either before, or after the appearance of Christianity, flourished in Greece, of all which 'tis unquestionably evident, that they constantly acknowledg'd a God and Providence. Advance we therefore

fore farther from these Men, to see what entertainment this Doctrine found amongst the *Latins*. *Seneca* has written whole Tracts about it, and hath (as I told you some of the *Greeks* had done before him) from the clearest Principles of unbiass'd Reason sufficiently shewn, that the unequal dispensations of Good and Evil in the World, do indeed no ways prejudice the Wise Government of Providence. † He assures

† *Nat. Quæst. Lib. 2. cap. 45.*

us withal, that the *Hetrurians*, to whom the *Romans* ow'd most of their Religious Rites and Ceremonies, were of the same Opinion. That they acknowledg'd the same Supreme Deity, who was the Maker, Preserver, and Governour of all things in the Universe; whom therefore, as the *Arcadians* and *Greeks* call'd him *Pan*, because he both fram'd the World harmoniously, and also by his All-wise Providence still keeps the same in tune, so the *Romans* stil'd him † *Stator*, not because

† *Id. de Benef. Lib. 4. cap. 7.*

at the Prayers of *Romulus* (as the Historians pretend) he made the *Roman* Armies when flying from their Enemies, to stand; *sed quod stant beneficio ejus omnia*, but because by his means all things stand, and are upheld in their being. *Tully* for the same reason calls him *Providentem, Cogitantem, & Animadvertentem, & omnia ad se pertinere putantem*. And in another

ther place, *sit persuasum civibus*, says he, and so on. Let all the Citizens assuredly know, that God takes particular notice what kind of Persons we are, with what mind and devotion we perform the acts of religious Worship, and that he will deal with us according to our Works, whether they be good or bad. And (not to mention other Books, out of which quotations would be endless) in his second *de Naturâ Deorum* he has so fully and convincingly prov'd the Providence of God from the wonderful *Phænomena* in nature, that that unparallell'd Treatise seems to be nothing else, but a continued Comment upon that of the Royal Psalmist: *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy goodness.* To these subscribe the whole class of *Latin* Authors, neither Lawyer nor Physician, neither Orator nor Poet, nor any other of what profession soever warping from this Truth. Add we to these the *Persian Magi*, whom *Suidas* calls φιλοσόφους καὶ φιλοθεούς καὶ πύρους. And *Apollonius Tyanaeus*, who, as † *Philostrophus* tells us in his Travels into *India*, made some stay in *Persia*, and convers'd with them twice every day, ἐπελάττας τῶν θεῶν. Ministers of the Gods. Add we likewise the *Indian Brachmans*, who, though they neither worshipped Images as others

† *Apollon.
Epist. ad
Euphrat.*

others, nor ate what was Animate; though they never allow'd themselves the liberty of drinking either Wine or Beer, but were contented with the easie Provision of a cool running Stream, yet were therefore,

† *Euseb. de*
Pr. Ev. L.
 6. c. 8.

says † *Bardisanus Syrus*, far remov'd from the confines of malignity, because they attended wholly upon God, agreeing with the *Græcians*,

† *Lib. 15.*
p. 730.

as † *Strabo* tells us, in this, that God is the Creator and Governor of the World. Add we lastly the

Thracians, the *British* and *French* Druids, and the *Æthiopick* Gymnosophists, who as it appears from Authors of unquestionable Authority, do all bear witness to this truth. In short, there is no Nation under Heaven so fierce and cruel, so wild and barbarous, so stupid and brutish, but what has its Altars and Sacrifices, its Vows, and Prayers, and Invocations; so that upon the whole we may safely conclude, that this Doctrine of a Providence is confirm'd by the constant and universal suffrage of all Mankind, *Non*

De Benef.
Lib. 4. cap. 4

enim, as *Seneca* truly speaks, in *hunc furorem omnes mortales consensissent alloquendi surda Numina & inefficaces Deos*; For though the Divine Nature be really in it self as Great and Excellent as *Epicurus* would have it, yet unless Men had been fully perswaded, that it did

not

not abstract it self from the concernment of this World ; all its Greatness and Excellency would only have administr'd to its own satisfaction, whilst 'twould have been impossible, that all Mankind should by consent have been so extravagantly fond and ridiculous, as to have worshipp'd a Being, who would neither hear them, nor help them. Let then this great Antipronoiist, but stand to his own Argument, *viz.* that that must needs be true, which all Men allow, and he will see, that for the same reason he believes a God, he must of necessity embrace likewise, that *Anum Fatidicam Stoicorum*, as he scoffingly terms Providence.

But because there were never wanting some Persons in the World, so excessively fond and partial to themselves, as to imagine, that they alone enjoy the happy *Goshen*, the Dwellings of Light, the Regions of Wisdom and Knowledge, whilst all the other part of Mankind lie in Ignorance and Darkness, and the shadow of Death, so that neither the concurrent and harmonious Testimony of the Creatures, nor yet the consentient acknowledgment of all Mankind in general can work their wiser Souls into a just Belief of this Doctrine of a Providence, I now proceed in the third place to shew, that God has in all Ages given such signal Evidences, and unquestionable Proofs of his Providence

fidence over us, that we may as well doubt of our own Existence, or of any thing else we converse with in the World, as of the Divine Presence amongst us. And this I shall do,

1. By shewing, that such extraordinary Punishments have over-taken some wicked Persons in this Life, that they could be nothing less than the effects of Divine Vengeance.

2. From Prophecies,
And lastly from Miracles.

1. Such extraordinary Punishments have overtaken some wicked Persons in this Life, that they could be nothing less than the effects of Divine Vengeance. The Wicked indeed are generally the Men, who of all others, if we look only upon things before us, are the most Happy. Though they never so much grind the face of the Poor, and insult over their Neighbours, who are more righteous than themselves; Nay, tho' they stretch out their mouth to Heaven, and their blasphemous discourses go to the ends of the Earth, yet as though God did indeed turn away his face, and would never see it: These are the Men, that prosper in the World, that spend their days in Wealth, and then in a moment (without any more trouble) go down into the Grave. This, I confess, has in all Ages rais'd no small scruples in the minds

minds even of Thinking Men. 'Twas not only the great knot of the Ancient Morality, and the most gravelling Problem of all the Heathen Philosophy, but that likewise, which chiefly exercis'd the Faith of some of those, who liv'd in the Sun-shine of Divine Revelation. By reason of the prosperous and flourishing condition of the Ungodly, and the frequent calamities and oppressions of the Righteous, they were apt to question the ways of Providence, and almost induc'd to conclude, that they had cleans'd their hearts in vain; and wash'd their hands in innocency. This the Royal Psalmist tells us was his case, *Psf.* 73. v. 2, 3. My feet, says he, were almost gone, my treadings had well nigh slipt, I saw the wicked in such prosperity; And the Prophet *Jeremy*, *cap.* 12. v. 1. though not daring to distrust the Righteousness of God, yet complainingly pours out his troubled thoughts in this anxious Expostulation: Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments, wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?

Now to remove the Doubts, and satisfy the scruples of such discontented Spirits, we need not extend our hopes beyond the ruins of the Grave, nor entertain our selves with the Contemplation of those Rewards and Punishments, which attend the different sorts

of Men in another World. Let us but go with *David* into the Sanctuary of God, and weigh them in the Balance of that place, and we shall soon learn the unhappy condition of these Men. Though their triumphing is but short, and they shall perish for ever like their own dung; though they shall flee away as a Dream, and shall not be found; and be chas'd away as a vision of the Night: In short, though they shall be turn'd into Hell, and the Sins of their Youth shall lie down with them in the dust; yet we shall be satisfy'd, that the hand of God frequently finds them out here, and that they have sometimes their portion of misery too in this Life. How oft is their Candle put out? and how oft cometh sudden destruction upon them? Their Excellency may mount up to the Heavens, and their Head reach unto the Clouds, yet because they have oppress'd and forsaken the Poor, they do but suck the poyson of Asps, and the Viper's tongue shall slay them: And this is no new observation, for 'twas known, says *Zophar*, in *Job* 20. the days of old, and found true ever since Man was plac'd upon the Earth; so that God is known by the judgment, which he executeth, whilst the wicked is trapt in the works of his own hands. Tho he suffers his own People to be evil entreated through Tyrants, and many of those Tyrants

Tyrants to go down to their Graves in peace, yet when the Sins of Men are grown loud and clamorous, and with outrageous cries perpetually alarm his Throne, that the Inhabitants of the World may learn Righteousness, and the mouth of all wickedness be stopt; that Men and Angels may admire his Justice, and be forc'd to confess, that though Clouds and Darkeness are sometimes round about him, yet Righteousness and Judgment are always the Habitation of his seat; He often (as some sober Heathens themselves have observ'd) by the dreadful Messengers of his wrath loudly proclaims his Providence to the World, assuring us by his remarkable severities to the greatest of Men, that neither the Multitude of their Associates, nor the Depth of their designs, nor the Unaccountableness of their actions to the Sons of Men, can any way secure them from the Omnipotent arm of Divine Justice, when their Sins have provok'd him to visit their transgressions with Rods, and their iniquities with Scourges.

The sad untimely Ends of the Persecutors of Christ and his Servants do abundantly illustrate this Truth; for did they dye the common death of all Men? Or were they visited after the visitation of all Men? No, The hand of Divine Justice seiz'd them terribly at last, and by the greatness of their

Punishment made abundant recompence for the deferring its Execution. *Herod* the Tetrarch, who to gratifie the revengeful Spirit of a naughty Woman, murder'd *John* the Baptist, and also with his Men of War set our Saviour himself at naught, was not long after depriv'd of his Tetrarchy, spoil'd of all his substance, and banish'd with his belov'd *Herodias* to *Lions* in *France*, where he liv'd and dy'd ingloriously ; And the dancing Damsel, who caus'd the good Man to be beheaded, walking over a frozen River, fell in, and had her Head cut off by the Ice. *Pilate*, after great disgraces receiv'd in *Jury* from those very Persons, whom to oblige he had done so much violence to his Conscience, as even against its full convictions to deliver up the innocent and faultless *Jesus* to be crucify'd at their will, and many disfavours likewise shewn him from his Master, the Emperour at *Rome*, who stript him of all his Honours, and banish'd him to *Vienna*, where he liv'd in ignominy and contempt, impatient at length of his calamity, kill'd himself with his own hands ; And the two *Herods*, *Ascalonita*, or the Great, who forc'd the Child *Jesus* to fly into *Egypt*, and then slew all the innocent Babes in *Bethlehem*, not so much as sparing his own Son for his sake ; and his Grandson *Agrippa*, who murder'd *St. James*, and, only because he saw it pleas'd

fed the *Jews*, intended to do the same to *St. Peter* also, were both at last for their Pride, and Cruelty, and outrageous Wickedness requited with shame and contempt, being after unspeakable anguish and torture both of Body and Mind eaten up alive with Vermin. *Nero*, whom for his brutish and extravagant manners his own Writers scruple not to call a Beast in Human Shape, and the very Monster of Mankind, a few Months after he had put to death the two great Pillars of the Church, *St. Peter*, and *St. Paul*, fell most ignominiously by his own hands; *Domitian*, *Maximin* the *Thracian*, *Decius*, and *Valerian* most infamously and barbarously by the hands of their Subjects and Enemies. *Dioclesian*, who in compliance with the importunities of his *Cæsar* and Son-in-law, *Galerius Maximianus*, rais'd a most fierce and universal Persecution against the Christians, was soon after by the very same Person forc'd to put off the Imperial Purple, and to retire into a Private Life, where surviving all his Honours, (his Images and Statues being broken down while he was yet alive) he at last, no longer able to bear up under the heavy pressures of so calamitous a condition, with his own hands, put a final period to his miserable life; And that Execrable and Bloody Tyrant, that depos'd and suc-

*Just. in
Vit. Ner.
c. 48.*

ceeded him, *Galérius Maximianus*, who commanded all the Poor in his Dominions to be gathered together, and then to be Shipp'd off, and drown'd in the Sea, only because they could not pay him tribute, made it his particular delight and daily recreation to revel in the Blood and Slaughter of his own Subjects, and also in a most provoking manner exalted his voice, and lifted up his eyes on high even against the Holy One of *Israel*; causing by Royal Edict the very Boys in their daily exercises at School to blaspheme the Holy *Jesus*, and destroying his Servants by all the exquisite Methods of the most ingenious cruelty and torture, was likewise for his exorbitant Villainies and outrageous Wickedness (as his own broken heart to the Glory of God, was at length forc'd to confess) repaid in his own coin, and made a standing Monument and everlasting Trophy of the Divine Justice, being with infinite horrors, and agonies, and pains, and convulsions of Body and Mind long prey'd upon, and at last eaten up alive with Vermin. The *Cæsar* likewise and Successor of this Savage and Barbarous Tyrant, *Maximinus*, who, envy'd his Predecessor (notwithstanding the heavy Judgment of God upon him) the glory of his unparallel'd Wickedness; and therefore (not to mention his other outrageous Villainies) when about to engage his
Col-

Colleague *Licinius*, most solemnly vow'd to *Jupiter*, that, if he should come off crown'd with Victory, he would not only suppress, and hinder the farther growth and progress of Christianity, but utterly extinguish and root it out altogether, that it might be no more in remembrance, quickly reap'd the Wages of his impiety, being soon after seiz'd with such violent pains and torments in his Body, together with unconceivable horrors and agonies of mind, that he roar'd out for the anguish and bitterness of his Soul, became frantick and like a Mad-man, rolling up and down upon the ground, going upon his Belly, and eating dirt like a Serpent, beating his Head against the Wall with such violence, that both his eyes burst out, leaving his Body a fit habitation for the darker Soul, 'till at last confessing, that his spiteful, unjust, and virulent proceedings against *Christ* and his Religion, had brought all this upon him, and mournfully imploring the Mercies and Forgiveness of the offended *Jesus*, he entered upon his portion in the Regions of Eternity. *Julian*, Uncle to *Julian* the Apostate, who even against the Emperours will, rais'd a Bloody Persecution against the Christians, rifled the Church at *Antioch* of all its rich and sacred Furniture, and not content therewith, defil'd the Holy Table in a most reproachful manner, spoil'd it of all its pre-

ious Vessels, throwing them upon the ground, insulting, ridiculing, and blaspheming the Holy *Jesus*, was immediately seiz'd by the hand of Divine Justice, his Bowels rotting within him, his Excrements coming out at his very Mouth, and Worms, notwithstanding the constant and most skilful applications of able and industrious Physicians, not ceasing to feed and prey upon his entrails, 'till (at that very time too, when the Answers of the Heathen Oracles, which had been consulted about his Life, were, all of them with one mouth pronouncing that he should recover, reading to him) they ended his miserable Life. And yet his Apostate Nephew, the Infamous *Julian*, though he had every day, even after his vile, inexcusable revolt, miraculous proofs and uncontrollable demonstrations from Heaven of the Divinity of Christ, dar'd notwithstanding to rally and recollect the scatter'd, defeated Forces of the Prince of Darkness, and professedly to wage War against the Son of God. Nothing could cool or allay the rage and madness of this bigotted Apostate. Not all the Glories, and Victories, and Triumphs of the Cross, which daily expos'd him and his impotent *Dæmons* to shame and contempt. Not the confess'd Excellency of the Christian Institution, whose unparallel'd

Rules

Rules and Customs he adopted into the Heathen Religion, that, since it would not upon its own, it might upon those Pillars stand safe and immovable. Not the late example of the Renowned *Constantine*, whom the imperial Standard of the Cross rendred Invincible and Glorious. Not the lamentable and tragical Ends of all the preceding Tyrants and Persecutors. Out of mere Spight and Malice, after full conviction of his Errors, he endeavour'd by all the Arts and Methods of Malice and Sophistry, of Policy and Cruelty, to lay wast the Habitation of *Zion*, and to make *Jerusalem* the unhappy Seat of Ruin and Desolation. But behold the Justice of the Divine Providence, which soon likewise overtook this impious, incorrigible Wretch. Before he had reigned two full years, which he spent in blaspheming Christ, and catching at all advantages of deriding whatever had any Relation to him, he fell ignominiously, as he confess'd himself in his blasphemous *Viciſti, Galilæe*, by the immediate hand of the offended *Jesus*. And indeed such extraordinary passages, back'd with the most authentick and unquestionable testimony, happen'd about his Death, that he must needs be of a very perverse and obstinate Disposition, who can imagine it to have been the effect either of Chance or Nature.

ture. * *Sozomen* tells us, that an intimate Acquaintance of this Tyrant, hastening after him into *Persia*, and forc'd, for want of the convenience of an Inn, to take up his lodging in a Church, saw there a Vision, which assur'd him, that he was slain; and that an Ecclesiastical Philosopher at *Alexandria*, nam'd *Didymus*, who had long mourn'd and fasted for the Afflictions and Calamities he had brought upon the Church, with strong cryings and tears, beseeching God for her deliverance, was the very same day inform'd by Horsemen in the air of the same thing, and commanded to signifie it to *Athanasius* the Bishop. *Julian* the Monk likewise the very same day this Tyrant receiv'd his death's wound, whilst he was praying and earnestly interceding with God for the preservation of his Church, from that Bloody Persecution he had threatn'd to bring upon her upon his Victorious Return from *Persia*, had the same reveal'd unto him. On a sudden, says † *Theodoret*, he dry'd his Eyes, and was fill'd with joy, which display'd it self in the chearfulness and serenity of his countenance. When his Friends, that were about him, beholding this sudden change, ask'd him the Reason of it, he answer'd, That the Wild Bear, which had wasted the Lord's Vineyard, had

* *Hist. Eccl.*
l. 6. c. 2.
p. 637, 638.

† *Hist. Eccl.*
l. 3. c. 24.

had now paid for all the damages he had done to it ; that he lay dead upon the ground, incapable of ensnaring or harming it any more. And we are told by

* *Zonaras*, that a certain Gentile * *Annal.*

Judge of *Antioch*, watching all *Tom. 3.*

night at the *Prætorium*, saw a *p. 24.*

strange Constellation in the Heavens, the Stars forming themselves into these words :

Σήμερον ἐν Περσίᾳ Ἰουλιανὸς ἀναίρεται. This day is *Julian* slain in *Persia*.

But of all the Miseries or Calamities, which have happen'd either to any particular Person or Nation since the Creation of the World, none ever bore more manifest Characters of the Divine Vengeance, than the *πανωλεθρία*, or utter Devastation of the *Jewish* Nation. Here I see such a cloud of sorrows, so thick and black drawn before us, that none but He, who inhabiteth the thick Darkness, could thus blacken and condense it. How dreadfully hath God covered the Daughter of *Sion* with a Cloud, and cast down from Heaven to Earth the Beauty of *Israel*, and remembred not his Footstool in the day of his anger ? She, that was once the Beloved City, the Perfection of Beauty, and the Joy of the whole Earth ; how suddenly was she forsaken of all her Lovers, and became a derision to her Enemies, and their Song all the day long ? To pass by, as less
confi-

considerable, those great oppressions and indignities, which from the Ascension of *Christ* to the beginning of the Siege this miserable People underwent, from the several outrageous Governours sent them from *Rome*: After a long, close Siege, wherein through the innumerable multitudes of the People, who were all now assembled at *Jerusalem* to celebrate the Passover, they were reduc'd to such extremity, that the dung of Beasts was thought delicious Fare; Nay, that the softer Sex threw off the tenderness of Nature, Women feeding even upon the Fruit of their own Wombs. After the Red Horse had march'd furiously before them, all bloody with the effects of a Civil War, and the Pale Horse had follow'd after him with Death upon his back, and the Grave at his heels. After the unconceivable outrages and barbarities of three Factions within, who slaughter'd and butcher'd one another, even in their most Holy Places: And a Famine had so mercilessly rag'd amongst them, that it fill'd their Houses with dead Women and Infants, and the Streets with the carcasses of Elder Men; that the young Men pale and wan, like the cold ghastly Shades of Night, walk'd silently about the Market-place, fainting and dropping down as they walk'd, and yielding up the Ghost; and others, envying the happy state of those, whom Death had kindly convey'd

vey'd to Rest before them, went down alive into their Graves, and there quietly resign'd themselves up to the friendly embraces of the King of Terrors : In short, that, as their impartial Historian relates, a hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and fourscore dead Bodies were in less than three Months carried out of one Gate : Those lastly came, out of whose mouth issu'd Fire and Smoak, and Destruction. The *Roman* Army, like a mighty Torrent, broke in upon them, which with the sagacity of an Eagle pursu'd them whithersoever they fled, and sparing neither young nor old, Priest nor People, put infinite numbers of all sorts to the Sword, that none could pass the narrow Streets for heaps of dead Bodies. They ras'd the Wall of the City, set fire to its stately Buildings, nay, spar'd not the Temple it self, whose Flames, though spreading with that Horror, and raging with that fury, that the Hill whereon this stately Fabrick was situate, seem'd to have been burnt up by the Roots, were yet wonderfully allay'd, and abated by those continual streams of Blood, which flow'd from the Bodies of the slain. The Cross, which forty Years before, against all the Laws of God and Man, they so outrageously demanded, became their own most just and equal portion, when the Crucifiers of the
 Lord

*Joseph. de
Bello Juda-
ico Lib. 6.
cap. 16.*

Lord of Life were themselves in such vast multitudes crucify'd by their insulting Enemies, that there was left no space for the Crosses, nor indeed Crosses for their Bodies to be crucify'd upon. The flower of their Youth was led to *Rome* in triumph, all under seventeen Years of Age sold into Bondage, and the rest sent bound, some to *Egypt* to groan and faint again under the heavy pressures of intolerable slavery, others into divers Provinces to fight with Beasts in the Theatres; so that, tho', as my

|| *Id. de Bell.*
Jud. l. 7.
c. 14.

|| Author attesteth, even in the midst of all their miseries they would not return to him, that smote them, but for all this sinned yet more, and provok'd the Holy One of *Israel*, being as proud and arrogant as if all things were well with them; yet, as he confesseth, 'twas their wickedness and impiety, which exceeded the provocations even of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, that led their Young Men into Captivity, and deliver'd up their whole Nation into the Enemies hand. Those merciless Flames, which devour'd their Houses and Temple, did in a lively manner represent unto all others the Burning of God's Wrath against them; And the Brave, Victorious *Roman* General ascribed all the Glory of his success to God, confessing that his Arms and Engines would have prevailed nothing at all, unless

unless He in a most extraordinary manner had assisted him in the War, and overthrown their Walls and Bulwarks. Nay, *Eleazer* himself (the Captain of those *Sicarians* or Cut-throats, who first revolted from, and also last held out in the Castle *Massada* against the *Romans*.) exciting his desponding Followers, to the glorious exploit of dispatching with their own hands all their Wives and Children, and then bravely to do the same Execution upon themselves, (which accordingly they did) to enforce his exhortation tells them plainly, that 'twas absolutely impossible for them ever to dream of Victory, God manifestly fighting against them, having for all their unparallel'd Villainies irreversibly destin'd their Nation to utter Ruin and Destruction. And indeed what else spake those many Signs and Presages of their approaching Destruction? τὰ τῶν Θεῶν κηρύγματα· as *Eusebius* calls them, *Hist. Eccles. L. 3. c. 8.* those Sermons, as it were, of God himself, whereby he declared his irreversible Decree against them: The Comet, which in form of a fiery Sword hung over the City for a whole Year together, shedding its destructive and pestilential influence upon the Inhabitants: That strange Light, which before the first Revolt, and the beginning of the War, the People being gather'd together to the Feast of unleavened Bread, saw at

nine of the Night for half an hour together, so gloriously shining about the Altar and the Temple, that it seemed to have recalled the Brightness of Noon-day ? That wonderful Apparition, which before the Sun-rising was seen in the Air all over the Country of Chariots and Armed Men in Battel Array, passing along in the Clouds, and encompassing the City round about ? The Inner-Gate of the Temple, which tho' all of massie Brass, and that at Night had always twenty Men at least to shut it, and was fastned with locks and bars of Iron, was seen at the first hour of the Night to open of its own accord ?

*Euf. loco
suprà lau-
dato.*

φωνὴ ἀθρόα. The Voice, as it were of a great Multitude, which on the Feast-day call'd Pentecost, the Priests heard in the Inner-Temple, when the Guardian-Angels took their leave of it, and call'd upon one another to depart thence ? That dreadful wo, which for seven Years and five Months, one *Jesus* with a mournful Voice continued to denounce against the City, Temple, and People, 'till at length beholding the Beginning of those Sorrows, he had so long foretold should come to pass, to assure the People of their final completion, he cryed wo to himself also, and was immediately struck dead with a Stone shot out of an Engine ? Nay, to look forward, how came *Turnus Rufus* with

with a Plough-share to tear up the very Foundations of the Temple, not so much as leaving one Stone upon another? Or what meant that dreadful Eruption of Fire, which (as with unquestionable Authority those two Ecclesiastical Historians, * *Socrates* & † *Sozomen* relate) hindred this unhappy People, when *Julian* the Apostate, in hopes to have proved

* *Lib. 3. c.*

20.

† *Lib. 5. c.*

22.

Christ a false Prophet, gave them encouragement, from laying the Foundations of the Temple; and not only consum'd and calcined the instruments and materials they had prepar'd, but also by a terrible Earthquake shook down the Houses and Buildings, that stood about the place, and kill'd them upon the spot, that attempted the Work? What, I say, spake all these, but that God had quite thrown off this treacherous, perverse, and stiff-necked People, and given a final divorce to his Spouse for her abominable Fornications? She had kill'd the Prophets, and ston'd them, that were sent unto her with Letters of Peace and everlasting Mercy. She would not be reclaimed either by Mercies or Judgments, but the Arms of Divine Goodness were stretched out all the day long to a disobedient and gain-saying People. Though they had evident and uncontrollable demonstrations, that *Jesus* was the *Messiah*; all their Descriptions and Prophecies exactly

concentring in his Person, and not only they themselves, but even the very Heathen Nations just then, when he came, instantly and every moment expecting his coming; though the Heavens bow'd themselves to let down the Heavenly Host to celebrate his coming, and one of them cloath'd with the Brightness and Similitude of a Star, called the *Levantine* Princes to assure them, that their King was come; yet, as though they resolved to frustrate the Decrees of Heaven, and to break the very Golden Chain of Predestination, they would not that he should reign over them; but because he appeared not with that glorious Retinue and Majestic Grandeur, which they expected, and in which he shall appear at his Second Coming, instead of Echoing forth their Hosanna's to the Son of *David*, reproached and vilified him as but the despicable Son of a poor, indigent Carpenter. Though he spake as never Man yet spake, did such Works as no Man could have done, unless the Holy Spirit of God had in a most extraordinary manner been with him; Though his Conversation, personal Perfections, and the whole tenour and circumstances of his life did all, as *Josephus* himself confesseth, exceed all measures of Human Greatness or Wisdom, yet they slighted his Doctrine, as the talk only
of

Antiquit.
Jud. L. 18.
cap. 4.

of an idle, illiterate Person, and traduced his Miracles as a trick of imposture, and the effects of a black Confederacy with the Infernal Powers, and could afford him no better titles, than those infamous ones of Glutton, Drunkard, Traitor, and Friend in the worst sense of Publicans and Sinners. Nay, as though all this, and infinitely more had been too little for afflicted Innocence to suffer, they violently laid hands upon his Sacred Person, treated him as the vilest Mifcreant, ὡς σφικαδισμα τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ πάντων πρὸς εὐνοίας as the Filth of the World, and the Off-scouring of all things, haling him through all the stages of contumely and disgrace, and at last by their tumultuous out-cries, and malicious suggestions prevailing with the Governour to put him to death. And now one would expect, that their Rage and Madness against him should terminate in his death, and lie buried and extinct in the Sepulchre, where they had laid him. But, alas ! Malice is restless as motion, insatiable as the Grave, and implacable as the Powers of Darkness. To fill up the measure of their iniquities, they persecuted him in his Apostles, scourging some of them in their Synagogues, and putting others to death, only because they attested what their Adversaries themselves knew to be true, viz. that they had seen him alive after his Resurrection.

And thus the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost, drove them out of their own Land, dispers'd and scattered them over the face of the whole Earth, making them the scorn and derision of all, that are round about them, and yet (which is singularly to be observed) never suffering them by their mixture, with other Nations to loose themselves, as the ten Tribes of *Israel* have done, as though he intended them for a standing Memorial and everlasting Example of his Power and Vengeance. And all this according to the punctual Predictions of Him they had rejected, even of the Ever-Blessed and Immortal *Jesus*. Which brings me to my second particular, which is to shew, that God hath likewise by Predictions or Prophecies given indubitable Evidence of his Being and Providence in the World.

2. Tho' the observations of the Star-gazing *Chaldeans* and *Ægyptians*, and the several kinds of Predictions used by the South-sayers among the *Romans*, (as *Tully* in his second Book *de Divinatione*, and that other of his *de Fato* has shewn at large) and the *Effata* likewise of the Heathen Oracles themselves

|| *Apud Timæum*, (as, besides this Author, || *Platarchidem*, § 10, † *Æschylus*, † *Tacitus*, *Phædrum*.

† *Vide variorum* † *Plutarch*, and many other
Notas in Virgil. Pagens of great Antiquity and
Æncid. 6. vers. Learning have jointly obser-
 99, 100. ved)

ved) were generally so vain, ridiculous, and uncertain, that the *Stoicks* would scarce allow a wise Man so much as to honour them with his presence ; yet that there have really been some Predictions or Prophecies concerning future things, which in their various circumstances were purely contingent, is so universally attested by the unanimous suffrage of all Mankind in general, (*Epicurus* himself not denying it) that 'tis impossible any Man can be ignorant of it, who is never so little conversant either with Sacred or Profane Writers. For to say nothing of those many strange and wonderful Oracles, whereby (as *Grotius* collects from *In-*

cha, *Acosta*, *Petrus Cieza*, and others) the wild uncivilized *Americans*, in the Kingdoms both of *Mexico* and *Peru*, were foretold of the coming of the *Spaniards* many Ages before their arrival, and of the oppressions and calamities, which would thence ensue : Those ten Prophetesses so famous throughout the World, call'd from their knowledge of Divine Counsels *Sibyllæ*, whether divinely inspir'd, (as with some great and learned Authors I am very apt to think) or (as others) acted only by the Devil, who from the Writings of the Prophets learn'd those truths they pronounc'd, foretold (as you

*De Verit.
Rel. Christ.
Lib. 1.
Cap. 17.*

shall see by and by) such things, as could originally flow only from such a Being, whose understanding is infinite.

But, alas! we need not borrow light from the faint, and cold glimmerings of these twinkling Stars, having the glorious and uncorrected Rays of the Sun it self to guide us in our search. I mean the Sun of Righteousness, our Blessed Saviour, who by his Divine Spirit did in all Ages of his Church, not only fore-shew the transcendent Mysteries of his own Incarnation; but reveal likewise to his Servants the Prophets, other things, which in the fulness of time should also come to pass. Such was the promise given to *Abraham* of his Posterity's returning out of the Land of *Egypt* after four hundred Years slavery there, and inheriting the Land of *Canaan*. Such was the Prophecy

concerning *Josiah*, which, as *Josiah*
Antiq. Jud. L. 10. c. 4. *sephus* witnesseth, was given three hundred sixty and one years before

he was born. Such was the calling of *Cyrus* by name in * *Isaiah* a hundred
 * *Cap. 45.* years likewise before his Birth.

Such, lastly, were *Daniel's* Prophecies concerning the Kings both of *Greece* and *Rome*, with many others. Now there is no Man, tho' never so Atheistically inclin'd, who can in reason call in question the truth of these
 Prophe-

Prophecies. † The very Infidels will rise up, and stop the mouths of such daring Men, and the Wise and most Considerate of the Heathens themselves pronounce them unreasonable. For no sooner did *Moses* vouchsafe to take off his veil, and to make himself known to the Sages of *Greece*: No sooner did the Prophets leave their more private Retirements in their own Land, and shew themselves publicly in the Schools of the Philosophers; but Men of the greatest Authority and Learning rose up, and did them Reverence. They were unwilling indeed to give them the Chair, or to dethrone their irrefragable Masters for their sakes; yet for their great antiquity, known abilities, and special integrity, All except *Perphyry* (who to evade the Authority of *Daniel's* Prophecies, does not blush to affirm, that they were written in the times of *Antiochus* after the things were done, and impos'd upon the World under that Prophet's name, tho' 'tis apparent from † *Josephus*, that they were shew'd to *Alexander* the Great in his advance towards *Jerusalem*, above one hundred and fifty years before *Antiochus*) allow'd them the credit of Venerable, Faithful, and Di-

† *Vide Justinum M. in Paræn. ad Græcos p.9,10. Grotium de Verit. Rel. Christ. L.1. c.16. Et eruditum Dodwellum in Tractatu suo de Historiâ Sanchoiathonis c.31,32.*

† *Antiq. Jud. L. XI. cap. 8.*

vine Writers. Since therefore 'tis granted
 on all hands; that these things were by such
 and such Men thus punctually foretold ;
 since being foretold they as punctually came
 to pass ; we must either ascribe them to some
 other cause, or resolve them wholly into the
 Providence of God. But now what cause
 in nature can be found sufficient for the pro-
 duction of such great, such wondrous Ef-
 fects ? To pass by the Dreams of *Philo Ju-
 dæus*, *Plutarch*, *Maimonides*, and others,
 concerning I know not what prognostick
 Vertue in Human Souls, as not worth a con-
 futation : Of all Created Beings, the Ange-
 lick Nature partakes most of the Divine.
 They are Creatures of noble Faculties and
 enlarged capacities ; and amongst all those
 glorious Endowments God has been pleased
 to bestow on them, their Knowledge cer-
 tainly can't be the least, from which the
 Philosophers have given them their names.
 Can then these *Dæmons*, these Intelligences
 produce their cause ? or bring forth their
 strong Reasons ? Can they bring them forth,
 and shew us what shall happen ? or declare
 to us things for to come, that we may know
 them ? No. Their understanding indeed is
 great and wonderful ; but the Divine alone
 is infinite and infallible. They can pene-
 trate far into the depth of natural causes, and
 from circumstances and signs, shrewdly con-
 jecture

jecture at future Events. But because the things are in themselves contingent, and may be or not be, either as the Will of Man, or the Causes in Nature, on which they depend, vary or not vary, their Predictions can never be certain or infallible; it being the incommunicable Prerogative of such a Being, who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins, and spieth out all our ways; who knoweth all the foldings of our hearts, all the turnings and windings of our unsettled Resolutions; who ruleth all things, and directeth all their Operations to their several Ends, and upon whose will the actions of all depend, to foresee the certain Effects depending purely upon those Causes. Hence arose that known Ambiguity in the Heathen Oracles; the Devil (as the wiser *Pagans* (you have seen) themselves have observ'd) not daring to answer plainly and directly to the Question propos'd, lest the Event should at last discover his ignorance, and manifest him to be (what he really was) an Impostor and the Father of lyes; and upon this account, says * *Servius*, *Jupiter* * *In Virg.*
Ammon was pictur'd with Rams *Æneid. 4.*
Horns, because his answers had *v. 196.*
as many turnings and windings as they.

But now if the Knowledge of these abstracted Spirits was thus miserably foil'd (as
that

† Περὶ Λο-
γίων.

that greatest Patron of Paganism,
 † *Porphyry* himself is forced to
 confess) in things only contin-
 gent; then how much less can they attain
 to the knowledge of those things, which be-
 long only to God? Those things I mean,
 which depend neither upon any natural
 cause, nor upon the will of Man, but whol-
 ly and entirely, as the Apostle speaks, upon
 the will of God. Those things, which he
 determined in himself before the World be-
 gan, and which are the pure Emanations
 of his free Goodness and Mercy: Such as
 the Incarnation, Passion, and bitter Death
 of the Son of God for the sins of Mankind.
 His Resurrection and Ascension into Hea-
 ven. His Rejection of, and exemplary Ven-
 geance upon his Crucifiers the *Jews*, and
 the calling of the *Gentiles*; all which were
 not only foretold by the Holy Prophets; but
 some of them likewise (as † *Opso-*
 † *Præfat. in* *pæus* himself confesseth; and the
Orac. Sibyll. whole Class of the primitive Fa-
à Galileo in thers, but especially *Constantine*
lucem edita the Great, in an Oration written
 by him in *Latin* to a Synod of Prelates in
 his days, has learnedly asserted; and the rea-
 sons alledged by *Gallæus*, *Vossius*, and other
 Learned Men to the contrary do not im-
 pugn) particularly presignify'd by the ten
 fore-mention'd Prophetesses of the Heathen
 World.

World. Which of all the abstracted Spirits, I say, hath known this Will of the Lord, or who hath been here his Counsellour? Now indeed, the Apostle tells us, *Ephes. 3. 10.* unto Principalities and Powers in Heavenly Places, *i. e.* to the Heavenly Princes and Potentates, Angels and Archangels, is made known by his dispensations in the Church the manifold Wisdom of God. But, alas! before his actual descent into the lower parts of the Earth, They were at so wide a distance from the knowledge of these secrets of the Lord, that though he had in some measure revealed and communicated them to his Church, their understandings were nevertheless confounded, and they could only gather some general, dark, and obscure notices of them from the Shadows and Præfigurations they then lay under. They knew, it must be confess'd, that Mankind was to be redeemed, the *Messiah* cut off, and the *Gentiles* called. But what Death he should die, and how the *Gentiles* should be called, they were not able to apprehend. They study'd and seriously meditated upon these things, desiring, as *St. Peter* tells us, to look narrowly into them, and clearly and distinctly to discern all the particular methods and contrivances of Providence: But, after all their search and study, their puny, finite understandings were lost in the intricate

cate *Mæanders* of Divine Counsels, and entirely swallowed up in the unfathomable Profundity of Eternal Determinations. And for this reason St. *Paul*, I conceive, may be understood, *Col. 1. 26.* to call the Gospel a Mystery, because 'twas hidden, as he there says, ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος. Not from Ages perhaps, as we render it, but from Angels, which amongst those Hereticks the Apostle there makes it his business to confute, were, (as *Irenæus* discourseth at large in his discovery of the *Valentinians*) commonly known by that name. Now then, since 'tis most evident, that there have been certain and infallible Predictions both of such things, which considered in their own causes were purely contingent, and also of some others, which were farther advanced above the Sphere of Created Understandings; borrowing their whole entity from the free determinations of the Divine Will; since it is as evident, that such certain and infallible Predictions could proceed from nothing less, than Infinite Wisdom and Goodness; we can have no possible pretence to distrust any longer the good Providence of God, who has in all Ages vouchsafed to make such gracious Revelations of his Will, and by the most convincing, undeniable Proofs, perpetually to attest his presidence over the Sons of Men. But though the case be thus plain,
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and to all thinking, intelligent Persons, put beyond all possibility of distrust ; yet Miracles being generally looked upon to be the most effectual means not only for the conversion of Infidels, but also for the satisfaction of doubting Souls ; Being they are the most immediate Credentials of Heaven, those which do nearest affect our senses, and consequently have the strongest influence upon our minds, I proceed lastly to shew, that God has not been wanting in his part even in this thing ; but that by many undoubted Miracles, also he has to all the World attested this great truth.

3. Many false Prophets indeed have ever been in the World, who by signs and lying wonders have miserably beguiled the Souls of the over-credulous and incogitant. *Simon Magus*, you know, by his jugglings and impostures so bewitched the unthinking People of *Samaria*, that they all gave heed to him from the least to the greatest, acknowledging him to be the mighty Power of God. And when he afterwards came to *Rome*, by his Diabolical Sorceries he worked himself into so good an Opinion with the Emperor, that he † erected a Statue to him with this Inscription : *Simoni Sancto Deo*, to *Simon the Holy God*. After him *Cerintus*, *Menander*, *Basilides*, and others came

† *Videas Justinum M Apol. 2. (Reverâ I) p. 69. & Tertull. Apol. cap. 13.*

came upon the Stage ; and *Barchochebas*, *David el David*, and others are memorable for their miserable delusion of the *Jews*. But chiefly such great and glorious things are spoken by some Heathens of that Fanatick, Lying, and Pedantick *Pythagorean*, *Apollo-nius Tyanæus*, that *Hierocles* has the impudence and malice to parallel him with our Saviour himself, and his Apostles. He has the impudence and malice, I say, to do this; for that it could be nothing else, not only

† *Cudworth* in his *Intellect. Syst.* p. 268. and *Parker* in his *Divine Authority of the Christian Religion* Parag. 27.

Eusebius of old, and † two modern Authors of our own have clearly evinc'd from *Philostrotus's* own account of his life, but even the *Pagans* themselves have likewise demonstrated: for during his life time, they generally looked upon him only as a rōne, or infamous inchanter, accusing him for this very Crime before the Emperor *Domitian*, who, having heard the cause, slighted and despised both him and his accusers, and dismiss him the Court for an idle, vain, fantastick Fellow.

These things, I confess, have done unconceivable prejudice to the Authority of true and real Miracles, and laid grievous stumbling-blocks in the ways even of considering Men. For some have hence too rashly concluded, that not only God, but the Prince
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of Darkneſs likewise, whenſoever he pleaſeth, may be the Author of a true and real Miracle, and conſequently that the working of them do no ways inſerr a God and Providence in the World; and others as haſtily, that there was never any ſuch thing as a real Miracle in the World, but that all we hear of, were pure cheats, ſophiſms, and deluſions. Theſe latter might as well have inſerr'd, That there are no Jewels, becauſe there are Counterſeits; and that legitimate demonſtrations are but Figments and Chimæra's, becauſe there are alſo Sophiſms and Paralogiſms. But I haſten to the Firſt.

1. Then, Neither the Devil, nor any other Created Being whatſoever can be the Author of a true and real Miracle, and conſequently if there have ever been any in the World, (as you ſhall ſee by and by there have) they clearly and undeniably inſerr a God and Providence. By a Miracle we underſtand no more, than a ſupernatural effect evident to Senſe. Or (to uſe the Deſcription of a great Divine of our own) every true Miracle is a production of ſomething out of nothing; and that either in the thing it ſelf, or in the manner of producing it. In the thing it ſelf, when it is of that nature, that it cannot be produced by any ſecond cauſes; as the raiſing of the dead. In the manner of producing it, when, though the thing lies within

within the possibility of second causes, yet it is performed without the help of any of them; as in the cure of Diseases without any use of means, by a word speaking, by the touch of a garment, and the like. Now the Devil being a finite Agent, which cannot exceed the bounds of Nature, can by no means be the cause of such miraculous Effects. His Power indeed is great, and his Faculties are exalted, and therefore from hidden, undiscerned Causes he may,

† *De Absti-*
mentia L.
2. p. 203.

as † *Porphyry* truly observes, and indeed has produced such strange, prodigious Effects, as (if it had been possible) might have seduced even the very Elect. But yet we know, that, as a Creature, he has his bounds and limits prescribed him, and that hitherto he may come, but no farther, and here of pure necessity his Operations must be staid. For how can the narrow, scanty Womb of Nature fully and adequately comprehend the infinite Dimensions of a supernatural Conception? Or a Being be summoned to appear out of the unsearchable depths of emptiness and nothing by any thing less, than the voice of irresistible Omnipotence? Who can alter the fix'd, immutable Laws of Nature? turn things out of that course and order, wherein they were placed at the World's first Production, and wherein they have constantly, regularly, and
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necessarily moved ever since? Surely none but He, who is the great Spring of all the motions of this great Machine of the World; who sets every wheel and cause a going, and is therefore glorious in Power, fearful in Praises, because alone doing wonders. Hence then we may safely conclude, that all those Works, which the Magicians did of old, how great and wonderful soever, never arrived to the height of a true and proper Miracle; but that they were only the productions of natural causes, which together with the manner of their production being altogether unknown, caused wonder and astonishment in the Spectators. Having therefore thus proved, that an Infinite Being alone can be the Author of a true and real Miracle, I proceed in the next place to shew, that there have been such things as true and real Miracles in the World, and consequently, since an Infinite Being alone can be the Author of them, they clearly and undeniably inferr a God and Providence.

2. Now I shall not here tell you from *Tacitus* and *Suetonius*, how *Vespasian* opened the Eyes of a Blind Man in *Egypt* by his Spittle, or from *Spartianus*, how a Woman was likewise cured of her Blindness only by kissing the Knees of the Emperour *Adrian*: the various artifices, which were then used

to assert the Divinity of the Emperours rendering these things very liable to suspicion. Neither shall I endeavour to confirm this truth by any argument drawn from the pretended Miracles amongst the *Romanists* at this day, since I doubt not, but that upon a severe, impartial scrutiny they would appear to be as false and counterfeit, as those above-mention'd; the end of them all being in truth the very same, *viz.* to draw Men's minds off from the simplicity of the Gospel, and to render the whole Creation again subject to vanity. I shall only then appeal to the unexceptionable Writings (for so, you have seen, the Heathens themselves acknowledge them) of *Moses* and the Prophets, and to the as indisputable Histories (as will appear in its proper place) of Christ and his Apostles, which seem to be nothing else than one continued testimony of this great truth. See then that great Law-giver and Prophet entred the lists with the Wise Men and Sorcerers of *Egypt*, whilst *Pharaoh* and his People, as a Cloud of Witnesses, stand by, and behold this great contest. They seem to stand a while upon the same level; neither side having any visible preheminance from the three first attempts. The Magicians Rods, as well as his, are (to all appearance) turned equally into Serpents:

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The Rivers too at their command flow on in streams of Blood ; and the Frogs hear their call, and from their watery Beds obediently come up upon the Land. But, see, the mighty Rod now animates the dust, and the old hungry Serpent complains for want of Food. Where now are the Wise Men, the Sorcerers, and Magicians ? Or how do his powerful Antagonists keep their ground ? Surely, as the Prophet speaks, the Princes of *Zoan* are Fools, the Counsel of the Wise Counsellours of *Pharaoh* is become brutish. Their assistant Spirits are non-plus'd and confounded, and therefore they are forced to acknowledge, that this in very deed is the Finger of God. March we hence with the same *Moses* to the Banks of the *Red-Sea*, and there behold the wonders he does too in the deep. No sooner does he lift up his Rod, and stretch out his hand over the Sea ; but the deep Waters acknowledge his commission, and obediently retire. He triumphantly conducts the Redeemed of the Lord, through the midst of the Sea upon dry ground, and the Waters are a Wall to them on their Right Hand, and on their Left. Again, he gives the Signal, and the Sea returns to its strength, and overwhelms the *Egyptians* with their Chariots and their Horse-men. I might farther recount to you

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the Miracles he shewed after this in the Wilderness. How he brought Waters out of the hard Rock, so that the streams ran withal in dry places : How he fed his murmuring Host with Manna and Quails ; and by his Prayer caused the Earth to open her Mouth, and to swallow up the factious and rebellious Company of *Korah*. I might remind you likewise of the continued series of Miracles under the Mosaical Oeconomy : Of the wonderful effects of the Waters of jealousy ; of the extraordinary plenty of the sixth year ; of *Urim* and *Thummim*, and of the special security of the Coasts of *Israel* every third year, though their Enemies very well knew, that all their Males at that time went up to Worship at *Jerusalem*. I might, enlarge, I say, upon these, and many other instances of the same kind, which occur in the Writings of the Old Testament ; but I shall therefore forbear mentioning any more, because all these scattered Rays did at last center into one point, and with united Glories shine together, when the Sun of Righteousness arose upon the World. Then especially did the Divine Providence give uncontrollable demonstration of it self to Mankind, when (as *Mahomet* in his *Alcoran*, and the *Rabbins* themselves in their *Talmud* confess) the Man *Christ Jesus* did such Works, as no
Man

Man could have done, unless God had been with him. The Gods of the Heathen, as *Arnobius* remarks, could never cure any Disease without some Prescriptions ; and *Æsculapius* himself, though celebrated for his Physick throughout the World, was really no better than a Mountebank or ordinary Emperick. Nay their great *Jupiter Capitolinus*, though arm'd with thunder, and so frightening the World with his pretended Omnipotence, was so far from being able to raise the Dead, cure the Blind, or heal the Lame, that he could not so much as cure a Wart, a Pimple, or any other the most trivial thing, without prescribing something or other for its removal. But now our Saviour never used any such means, having no need of any adjacent matter, of the virtue of Herbs, or any other Medicine. His Commission was large and unbounded ; His Power Divine, Infinite, and uncontroulable. He made the Lame Man to leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb to sing. By his word he silenc'd the Winds, and walk'd upon the furious Sea, as the * *Sibyl* speaks, with his feet of Peace. He open'd the Eyes of him, that was born Blind ; heal'd all manner of Diseases ; rais'd the Dead to life after four days Burial, and all this only with a

* *Lactant.
Divin. In-
stitut. Lib.
4. cap. 15.*

word of his Mouth, or a touch of his Hand. He cured them that were far off, as well as those, that were nigh ; and that with a bare Fiat, without sending any other Medicine, than health it self to his Patients. He saw into the very breasts of Men, discover'd their most secret thoughts and intentions, and accordingly either reprov'd or commended them. Neither did these refreshing Waters break out only in the Wilderness, or these wholesome streams flow only in the desert ; for he did not (as some now-a-days do) huddle up his actions in the dark, or lay the scene of his Miracles in an obscure, unknown corner amongst his Friends only and Followers ; but when his time was come, he shew'd himself openly to all the People, had his conversation amongst his sworn Enemies, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, to whom he proved his Commission beyond all contradiction. Nay, even in the midst of his greatest weakness, when he lay tortured and bleeding upon the Cross, he was still so mighty, so irresistible in power, that he opened the Graves, split the hard Rocks asunder, rent the Temples veil, and (as not only the Evangelists, but *Phlegon* likewise, Gentleman to the Emperour *Adrian*, in his general History of the *Olympiads* ; and *Thallus*, another Heathen cited by that accurate Chronologer,

nologer, *Africanus* ; and, as we are assur'd by * *Tertullian*, the * *Apol. c. 21* publick Records of the *Roman* Empire witness) darkened the Sun, and put Nature into such close mourning, that 'tis reported of *Dionysus* the *Areopagite*, who was afterwards *St. Paul's* Convert, that being then at *Egypt*, and observing this unnatural Eclipse, (the Moon then being in a direct opposition to the Sun) he cried out that either the God of Nature was suffering, or that Nature her self would be suddenly dissolv'd ; so that † *Celsus* betray'd either intolerable ignorance or malice, † *Vid Orig. in Cels. Lib. 2. p. 80.* when he scoffingly asked *Origen*, what mighty Work our Saviour did at his Crucifixion. Lastly, He was not (as *Mahomet* and other Impostors are) long holden by the bands of death ; but according to his own prediction he gloriously triumphed over Death and Hell ; rais'd that Temple, which his Enemies thought they had destroyed, on the third day ; vouchsafed to wear a Veil over his glorified Body for forty days conversation with his Disciples, and then before them all (Angels and Arch-angels singing all the way the unparalleled triumphs of this King of Glory) ascended into the highest Heavens, whence not many days after he made good his promise

to his Disciples, sending down upon them the Holy Ghost, whereby they were fully commissioned and impowered to propagate the Gospel throughout all the World.

Now then, Courteous Reader, if all these things are true, how can we any longer distrust the good Providence of God ? And that they are all true no Rational Man can deny. That *Christ* thus liv'd, and thus dyed ; that he wrought many Miracles, and at last under-went the no less ignominious, than painful death of the Cross, is granted on all hands. 'Twas not only written by *St. Matthew* for the use of the *Jews* in *Hebrew* eight years after his Ascension, (as, not to mention *Justin M. Athenagoras, Irenæus*, and the other Writers of the Age next after the Apostles) is sufficiently evident from *Clemens Romanus*, a Familiar of *St. Paul* ; and from *Ignatius, Polycarp, and Papias*, Disciples of *St. John*, who all quote this Gospel) when if it had been liable to suspicion, it might easily have been disproved, since there were many then alive, on whom his Miracles were said to have been wrought : Many, who had been Eye-witnesses of the same ; but also recorded by those Heathen Writers, *Tacitus* and *Suetonius*, and never so much as questioned either by *Fulian, Cel-sus, Trypho, Hierocles, Porphyry*, or any other

ther the most avow'd Enemies to Christianity. That he was not devoured by these wild Beasts, though his Garments were dy'd and dipp'd in Blood, the Souldiers, that kept the Watch, confessed upon examination to *Pilate*, || who thereupon wrote the whole History to his Lord *Tiberius*, which so much † affected him, that, when the Senate refused to receive *Jesus* into the number of their Gods, he set up his Image in his own private *Lararium*; gave liberty to any to believe on him that would; and prohibited the Officers to molest them under pain of Death. But we have yet a greater Witness than all these. For that *Jesus* our Saviour is now alive, and not only Governour over all the Land of *Egypt*, but Lord and King too of all the Nations in the World: That he did actually fulfill his promise to his Disciples, and continually watcheth over his Spouse, the Church, with the wakeful Eyes of his especial Providence, is plain beyond all contradiction.

I. From the sudden and miraculous downfall of the Kingdom of Satan; and secondly from the no less sudden and miraculous propagation of the Christian Faith, notwithstanding all the opposition, that it met with in the World.

|| *Vide Tertull. Ap. cap. 21.*

† *Id. cap. 5. Vide & Vossium in hunc locum Tertulliani in tractatu de Sibyll. Orac. c. 11. p. 58.*

1. I say, This is plain from the sudden and miraculous Downfall of the Kingdom of Satan. For tell me, O Man, whosoever thou art, who art apt to distrust the good Providence of God, how that almost unlimited and universal Dominion of Satan had been so suddenly overturn'd, if an Almighty Arm had not taken away the Pillars, which had so long supported it, and so caused it to fall into ruin and devastation? How had the powerful and innumerable Legions of the Prince of Darkness been beaten out of the strong holds, which they had so long possessed, if the Lord of Hosts himself had not broke in upon them, and overcame them, and risled them of all the armour, wherein they trusted, and so divided the Spoil? When the Son of God was pleased to bow the Heavens, and to come down, and dwell among Men, he scarce found a place, where to lay his head. The true God indeed was well known in *Jury*, and his name was great in *Israel*: But the Worship of false Deities, like an universal deluge, had, as it were, overwhelmed the face of the whole Earth. Devils and Idols had usurped his Dominions, and imperiously sway'd most of the Nations of the World. And yet how are the Mighty fallen? and the Gods, which made not the Heavens and the Earth perished? These
great

great Lords, which seemed to have raised to themselves an everlasting Empire over the Sons of Men, were almost in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye dispossessed of their Lodgings, thrown out of their Fortresses, and forced to leave the Temples, wherein they had so long dwelt. No sooner was the joyful News of the *Messiah's* Coming usher'd in by the Doxologies of the glorious Inhabitants of the Courts above; but that as the Heavens rejoyced, and the Earth was glad, so the gloomy Regions of Everlasting Darkness, were on the contrary fill'd with nothing, but Lamentations and Mournings, and Wo. Those weak and feeble Rays, which the Sun of Righteousness, even through the Cloud of Infancy darted upon the World, so affrighted and amazed them, that these Beasts of Prey immediately gat them away, and hid themselves close in their Dens. The most famous Oracles in the World, which began to lisp and stammer, as his coming drew near, now at his Appearance are generally doom'd to silence: the Devil either not replying at all to the humble interrogations of his admiring Votaries, or whining out his answer in lamentations and complaints, that his voice was to be no more recovered, but that the bright Glory of his Oracles was utterly gone from him. Nay
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to prevent all Cavils and Disputes, and that the greatest Sceptick might have no reason to doubt, that this was God's doing; but that all the House of *Israel* might assuredly know, that 'twas his Arm, his Arm alone, that thus miraculously brought Salvation to them, by rescuing them from the miserable thralldom of these proud, usurping Tyrants, the Impostor at last entirely dismantled himself of his accustomed disguises, and plainly

Vide Suidam in August.

confess'd to the Emperor *Augustus*, that 'twas not the deficiency of Prophetical Vapours, nor the general incredulity of Mankind, nor yet the Mortality of his own nature; but purely the *Hebrew* Child, which constrained him to hold his Peace,

Παῖς ἐβραῖος κέλεται μέ, θεοῖς μακάρεσσιν ἀνάσσειν,
τόνδε δόμον περιπτεῖν, καὶ αἰδῶν αὐτοῖς ἰκέσθαι.

i. e. There is an *Hebrew* Child, who, though in the appearance of weak flesh, is King of the Blessed Gods, that commands me to leave this House, and to return to Hell. And upon this account that Emperour built an Altar in honour of Christ with this Inscription: *Ara Primogeniti Dei*, The Altar of the First Begotten of God.

But as the beginning of the Declension of Satan's Kingdom was thus confessedly from the Son of God, the Prince of Darkness keeping

ping his Possessions safe and secure, 'till this stronger warrior took away his arms, and plundered him : So that he did not content himself with these less considerable Oventions, but still pursued his conquests, and by those very sufferings, whereby his Enemy thought to have quelled him, gloriously triumphed over the Grave, Death, and Hell. That by raising himself to life, he utterly de vested him of all his Power, and dragged him with all his Legions shackled and unarmed at the Wheels of his Triumphant Chariot, the Primitive Heroes and first Champions of the Faith made publickly discernable to all the World. How gloriously did the

† *Terrull.*
Apol. c. 23.

† Father display the triumphant Banners of his exalted Saviour, when he challenged the Persecutors of Christianity upon the pawn of his own Blood for a Sacrifice to their Vengeance, should he be baffled in the encounter, to let him make publick trial before their Tribunals of his Power, in controuling those disarmed and impotent Spirits, which the deluded *Romans* and other *Gentiles* adored and magnified as Gods? Nay, how victoriously did the Glory of *Christ* then shine forth, when not only the Learned and Experienced, *Lib. 7. contra* but (as *Origen* tells *Celsus*) the *Celsus* p. 334. meanest also of the People, the very Babes
in

in Christ triumphed and insulted over these Hell-hounds, where-ever they met them? In the name of *Christ* they forced them out of their Lodgings, and compelled them even in the presence of their Worshippers and greatest Adorers to confess plainly what they were. *O si audire eos velles, & videre,*

says † *St. Cyprian* to *Demetrian*, the stubborn and prejudiced Proconsul of *Africa*. And || *Min. Felix* appeals to the Heathens

themselves for the truth of these things. He tells them, that their own eyes had seen their greatest Gods cast out of the Bodies they had possessed, by the ordinary Christians; that their own ears had heard the same Gods confess, that they were no Gods, no not so much as good Spirits; but Devils, wicked, Apostate Angels, who made it their business to abuse the World, and to ensnare as great a part of Mankind, as they could, into Ruin and Perdition. In a word, *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Arnobius*, *Lactantius*, and all the other Primitive Defenders of the Faith most justly, as well as triumphantly enlarge upon this point; which is acknowledged, even by †

† *Apud Eusebium de Pr. Ev. L. 5. c. 1.*

Porphyry himself, who, discoursing of that plague, which furiously raged at *Messina* in *Sicily*, where

where he dwelt, expressly asserts, that therefore *Æsculapius* could afford them no assistance, because *Jesus* was worshipped in the World. So that, you see, 'tis plain from the Downfal of Satan's Kingdom, that *Jesus* our Saviour, though once persecuted and slain, is yet alive; and that as he always did, so he still continues to take care of the World.

2. This is no less apparent from the as sudden and miraculous Propagation of the Christian Faith, notwithstanding all the opposition, that it met with in the World. For how soon did the sound of the Gospel go out into all Lands, and its words even to the ends of the Earth? How swift, I say, upon the Mountains were the Feet of them, that carried these glad Tidings, this Gospel of Peace? Had they rode upon the nimblest Morning Ray, or gone flying upon the Wings of the Wind, they could scarce have sooner visited all Quarters of the World. *Egypt, Africa, Libya, Mauritania*; yea, the wandering, barbarous *Scythians*; the rude, naked, stupid *Indians* within the compass of forty years were turn'd unto the Lord, and the remotest corners of the West too (where, as *Tertullian* observes, the *Roman* Eagle, how triumphant so ever, could never penetrate) stretched forth their hands
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unto God. But could the Arm of flesh thus break through whole troops of Evil Angels, that stood with drawn Swords in their hands to stop them in their way? or mere Man grapple and contend with all the Powers of Earth and Hell? Could a few obscure, unknown Fishermen, who had neither Riches, nor Honour, nor Learning, nor Kindred to recommend them to the World, by their own insinuations so wonderfully engross the judgment and affections of all People, as to cause them for their sakes to bid a final adieu to the Traditions of their Fathers, and to throw off all the Rites and Ceremonies of that Religion, which for so many Ages had prevailed amongst them? Whence was it then, that where-ever they came, they so gloriously triumphed over the prejudices of Men's minds, grappled so successfully with the stubbornness of the *Jew*, and baffled the fine notions and speculations of the *Greek*? That, though they pretended to know nothing among them, but *Christ*, and him Crucified; Preached no other Doctrine, but such as called Men off from the advantages and pleasures of this World to tread in the steps of a poor, crucified Saviour, which too (though thus harsh to Flesh and Blood) was back'd at present with little other encouragement, than the invisible Rewards of another World;

World ; yet the Word of God so mightily grew and prevailed, that Men of all sorts and professions, *Greeks* as well as *Barbarians* gave up their names to *Christ*, and manfully listed themselves under the Captain of our Salvation ? Whence was it, I say, that though among the *Jews* and *Corinthians* in the first setting out of the Gospel, not many Wise, not many Mighty, not many Noble were called ; yet suddenly after in all Nations under the whole Heaven, Men of acute Parts, piercing Understandings, and raised Abilities became Profelites ? That Orators, Criticks, Lawyers, Physicians, and Philosophers of all Sects daily came over, and proved valiant Souldiers in the cause of God, and of the Lamb ? What induced the proud, haughty *Stoick*, who thought himself never a whit inferiour, neither in Happinefs nor Vertue to the Deity himself, gratefully to accept the mercies and guidance of a Crucified Saviour, and humbly to submit his Almighty Reason to the great, mysterious Truths of the Gospel ? What enticed the soft, luxurious *Epicurean* to divorce his darling Lusts for the embraces of the Holy and Immaculate *Jesus* ? or the refined Academick so willingly to renounce his former sentiments ; and, though not with-

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out the loss of many of his fine notions, to embrace the Faith ? Surely none but He, with whom those things are possible, which are impossible with Men ; and in whose hands are the hearts of the Sons of Men, as the Rivers of Water, which therefore he turneth whithersoever he will.

Again, if this Doctrine had not been in very deed from God, and continually supported by the Hand of Providence, how could it possibly have out-weathered those many Storms and Tempests, those Thunderings and Lightnings, whereby its Professors were so grievously torn and shattered, even in its infancy and first delivery into the World ? They no sooner appeared with it abroad, but they were looked upon as common Enemies, and therefore were every where opposed, and every where spoken against. Like their great Master, they were despised and rejected of Men ; the Subjects of continual Sorrows, and most intimately acquainted with Griefs. They had neither Kings for their Nursing Fathers, nor Queens for their Nursing Mothers ; but on the contrary all the greatest Powers and Potentates of the World combin'd together for many Ages,

to

to extirpate and banish them from off the Face of the Earth. Since then they were thus naked and destitute, stripped of all outward advantages, and exposed to the fury of so many wild Beasts, unless the Lord himself had been on their side, how could they have born up against all this opposition, and in spite of all the united Forces of their visible and invisible Enemies so gloriously have lifted up their Heads in triumph ; looking down with a brave and generous disdain upon the weak attempts of their Adversaries ? How could they with so much gallantry, with so invincible a patience and magnanimity have undergone the most exquisite torments, which the ingenious cruelty of Men or Devils could invent ; looking upon their Chains as their Ornaments, and accounting the Instruments of their Tortures the Ensigns of their Honour and Happiness ? In short, How could they, not as the *Stoicks* and *Epicureans* thrafonically speak of their Wise Man, but really and truly (as the Apostle remarks) have taken pleasure in Bonds, in Imprisonments, in Chains, in Reproaches, in Persecutions, in Distresses for Christ's sake ; professing to glory in nothing, but the Cross of Christ ?

Many, I confess, from a hardy, robust constitution have been enabled to undergo very fiery Trials, and we read of some, especially among the *Stoicks*, who have in the midst of their Pains derided their Tormentors, and resolutely and courageously born up their Spirits under the heaviest oppressions. But, alas ! what's all this to the incomparable bravery of our primitive Heroes, when (as the Christian in *Min. Felix* triumphantly tells his Adversary) the very Women and Children were of so invincible a courage, so unshaken a resolution, that they infinitely exceeded the very bravest Deeds, even of the most celebrated *Greeks* or *Romans* ? But now was it possible, that they should so far have forgotten the weakness of their Sex or Age, as thus gallantly to have encountered all sorts of dangers, boldly to have defended naked Truth in the face of Death it self, and to have laughed at Crosses, Swords, Fire, Racks, and all other dreadful Instruments of Torture, if Christ himself had not stood by them, charming them with the sweetness of his Love, and the hopes of Immortality ? Nature, you know, recoils and starts back at the first sight of these things ; and how efficacious soever the Principles of Philosophy may seem to some Men, sure I am they

they could not inspire their greatest and boldest Professors with courage enough for such formidable Encounters. The *Ægyptians*, (who among the Heathens bear the title of the eldest Sons of Wisdom, and are also particularly taken notice of for their eminent Learning, by the unerring Records of Divine Revelation) to avoid the fury of the Vulgar, lock'd up the whole Body of their Divinity, under Mystical Hieroglyphicks. And the untimely Death of *Socrates* so chill'd and pall'd the Spirits of his Divine Pupil, that to be in good Terms with the Publick, and to dispossess the People of the Opinion, that he was addicted to the sentiments of his Master, he prudently turn'd *Pythagorean*; wrap'd up his notions in *Ænigmatical*, *Cabalistical* Allusions; and, as he acknowledgeth himself in one of his Epistles to *Dionysius*, published none of his Maxims, but under the name of *Secrates*, that he might not be accountable for his own Doctrine in a time, when the nicety of the People of *Athens* was offended at every thing. Nay *Aristotle* himself, to escape that storm, which threatned him from *Areopagus* for some of his (as they were esteemed) unorthodox Opinions, in a panick fear hastily pack'd up, and got him from *Athens*; and that other-

wise great and excellent Philosopher, *Jamblichus* unworthily took Sanctuary at a mysterious secrecy, sealing up his dogmata, because not favoured as formerly by the Royal Authority, under a profound and perpetual silence. In a word, *Josephus* in his second Book against *Appion*, universally chargeth the wisest Men of *Greece* with cowardice in this matter. They hold, says he, the very same things concerning God as the *Jews* do; εἰς πλῆθος δὲ δόξαις περιετρίβοντες τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῷ δόγματι ἐξενεγκεῖν οὐκ ἐτόλμισαν but had not the courage to teach their Doctrine to the Vulgar, because they were prepossessed with contrary Opinions. Whence, I say, abundantly appears the insufficiency of these weak and beggarly Elements, and that nothing less than an almighty Arm could have supported the sinking state of the Church in these primitive times. Else how came it to pass, that she did not expire upon the Rack, or breath her last in the Sea? That she was not devoured by wild Beasts, or utterly consumed in the Fire? that, tho' she was so miserably harassed and torn by her Enemies, that some of them erected Trophies and triumphal Arches in memory of their absolute Conquests and Victories over her, yet all this noise and out-cry was

was as empty as the Monuments they had raised for her, whilest, *Phœnix* like, she sprang more youthful and vigorous from her own Ashes, and that Ocean of Blood, which was thought to have choaked or drowned her, served only, as the Father observes, to render her Soil more fertile? That, lastly, when she was weak, then especially she was strong; so strong, that at length she put to flight all the Armies of Satan, wrested the worldly Power and Empire out of his hand, and then victoriously employed it against himself?

Mahomet's imposture, I confess, diffused it self in a very little time over a great part of the East. But to say nothing, how 'twas originally designed for the gratification of Men's Lusts, and by an industrious compliance with the dissolute manners of those Orientals prepared and qualified for their more easie Reception: It was carried, you know, upon the point of the Sword, and forced its way into the World by Rapine and Violence. But the Christian Church was of another nature. 'Twas her peculiar honour and privilege to grow victorious by sufferings, and to triumph in Persecutions; so that every Eye may see, that 'twas not her own Arm,

that upheld and protected her ; but that God alone, because he had a favour unto her, would not suffer those, that believed not, to exalt themselves against her. For surely none but He, whom the Winds and Seas obey, could by his voice allay the Rage and Fury of these Storms and Tempests. None but He, who casteth out the Counsels of Princes and maketh the devices of the People to be of none effect, could thus defeat the Machinations, evacuate the Designs, and controul the Power of the greatest Potentates of the Earth. Lastly, none but He, who by things, which are not, brings to nought things, that are, could by such weak and foolish things both non-plus the Wise, and confound the things, that were Mighty.

Ἐνίκησε ὅν μὴ πεφυκὼς κωλύεσθαι ὡς λόγῳ Θεῷ.

'Twas the word of God, continually led on by the conduct of Providence, and therefore could not be withstood by the force or power of any created Beings ; but maugre all the opposition of Men and Devils, uncontroulably enlarg'd its Conquests to the ends of all the Earth.

And thus I have dispatch'd my several Meditations upon this Subject ; having, I hope, to the full satisfaction of unprejudiced

ced Persons evinced the Reality of a God and Providence in the World. I shall only now briefly deduce some practical inferences from some considerations upon the Attributes of the Divine Nature, and conclude.

1. Then, You have seen, that God is Omnipotent. Hence let us learn to adore his Majesty, to revere his Power, and never to provoke him to anger by our Sins, who is able in the most dreadful manner to revenge himself upon us. If we fear to incur the displeasure of an Earthly Prince, because as in the Light of his Countenance is Life, and his Favour is as a Cloud of the Latter Rain, so on the contrary the Fear of him is like the roaring of a Lion, and his Wrath as the Messengers of Death; then surely we should much more beware of provoking the heavy Wrath of the King of Kings, whose voice is like the dreadful thunder, and whose indignation causeth everlasting Destruction. For is it not absurd to fear to offend them, that kill the Body, and after that have no more, that they can do; and not to tremble and quake to commit those Sins, whereby he is incens'd, who is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell:

But

But let the Contemplation of this Attribute, not only deterr us from sinning against God ; but teach us likewise to fly unto him , and after we have faithfully discharged our duty , confidently to rely upon him in all our dangers. For thus we shall find a stay and support in all our weakneses , and a sure and ready help in time of need. The wicked indeed , and such as put not their trust in God , shall flee , even when no Man pursueth ; but we shall be courageous and bold as a Lion. We shall be raised above both the Love and Fear of this present World , and (what

* *Quam enim mortem vel atrocissimam pro nihilo duxerit, locupletissime restatur flagrantissima illa hujusce Martyris Epistola ad Romanos.*

St. Chrysostom most * truly reports of that primitive Martyr, St. Ignatius) with as much ease and freedom lay down our lives, as other Men can put off their Cloaths ; being fully assur'd, that the same Almighty Goodness, which leads us through this Valley of tears, can and will also safely conduct us through the black and gloomy Regions of Death into the bright and glorious Mansions of Bliss and Immortality.

2. You have seen, that God is also Om-

Omniscient and Omnipresent ; that he is with us in our most private retirements, and, as the fore-mentioned Martyr adds in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, knows all the turnings and windings of our very thoughts and intentions. Let us then never flatter our selves, that we shall huddle up our wickednesses in darkness and obscurity, but always remember, that, though no mortal Man can behold us, yet the eye of Heaven is upon all our actions.

'Twas the advice, I remember,

of a Learned † Heathen to his Friend, that where-ever he was,

† *Senec.
Ep. 11.*

or whatever he was doing, he should still suppose himself in the presence of some reverend and worthy Person ; for this, he thought, would be a very effectual way to restrain him from doing any thing either unseemly or unlawful. And how happy he was in his observation, we daily experience, when the boldest Sinner of us all scarce ever presumes to lay open his corruptions before such as he respects. Thus the Morning is to the adulterer, even as the shadow of Death, and therefore his eye, though impatiently, waiteth for the twilight, and then too he disguiseth his Face, that no eye may see him. And having committed, he is ashamed to

own

own it; and if accused, he stiffly denies it; he wipeth his mouth, saith *Solomon*, and saith, I have not committed iniquity. But do we thus honour and revere our Fellow Creatures, and yet dare behave our selves wantonly in the presence of Him, before whom the Holy Angels reverently veil their Faces? Do we think our selves secure, if we can hide our impieties from such, who are Malefactors like unto our selves; when yet God, who is to be our Judge, our own Consciences, which must be produced as witnesses against us, and Satan our accuser, are all privy to them? Do we, I say, thus dread the knowledge of mortal Men, who, should they know our faults, would perhaps either conceal, or at least not be able to punish them: And are we not afraid to act our Villainies before Him, who will one day bring to light all these hidden things of darkness, and to our eternal reproach and confusion of face display them in their own most black and frightful colours, before the general assembly of his Saints and Angels? My Brother, I am persuaded you very well know, that these things ought not so to be. Since then we live in the presence of such a God, who is of purer eyes, than to behold

hold iniquity with the least approbation; let us with all care and diligence reform our lives, and by our pious conversation demonstrate to all the World, that we do with the good Ante-diluvian Patriarch in very deed walk with God. Let us make us clean hands, and pure hearts, and become holy before the Lord. Let us no longer delight in vanities, sow the Wind, and reap the Whirlwind, but (what the *Persians* are said to do once a year against their venomous Vipers) let us march out against our sins, beat down their strong holds, and bring into subjection every proud thought and imagination. Thus we shall approve our selves to Men and Angels, to Christ and his Father, who, when we have thus prepared their Lodging, will come unto us, and dwell with us, and rejoyce over us to do us good. Thus being at last disburthened of the disadvantages and encumbrances of mortality, we shall be translated pure and undefiled into the glorious Habitations of holy and unpolluted Spirits there no longer ἐν αἰνυματι, obscurely, as it were in a riddle, but clearly, distinctly, even face to face to contemplate the interiour beauties of the Lord.

Again,

Again, you have seen, that God is All-wise, and that therefore he cannot do any thing, but for the best and greatest ends. Let this support and bear up our Spirits in all our Afflictions, since, as *Job*, (who had no small share of them) speaks, they do not spring out of the dust, but come purely from that Being, who wisely ordereth all things for our good. If we would seriously lay these things to our hearts, and not content our selves with a bare habitual knowledge of them, but in all our troubles and distresses actually apply them to our considerations, neither the calumnies or reproaches of our adversaries, nor yet the unkind returns of our Friends; neither the frowns of Monarchs, nor the menaces of Fortune would be able to ruffle and interrupt our happiness, but the consideration that it is the Lord, who suffereth all these things, would happily prevent and stifle all murmurings and repinings, all reluctancies and disputings, and enable us, like the good Old High-Priest, to say with perfect resignation to the Divine Will: *Let him do what seemeth him good. Talis esset animus noster*, as the * Philosopher expresseth it, *qualis mundi status super lunam*. Though all things with-

* Sen. Ep.
LIX. *sub*
finem.

without should seem cloudy and tempestuous, yet our minds, like the superlunary Regions, would be full of peace and tranquility. With the bravery and gallantry of the † Prophet we should every one of us triumphantly cry out, even at our lowest ebb: Although the Fig-tree should not blossom, neither should Fruit be in the Vines; the labour of the Olive should fail, and the Fields should yield no meat; the Flocks should be cut off from the Fold, and there should be no Herds in the Stalls; *i. e.* though all the ordinary supplies of Human Life should fail: *Yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.*

† *Habac.* 3.
17, 18.

4. You have seen, that God is All-just, and that he will at length render to every Man according to his Deeds. Let this remind us to be just in all our Actions, that when ὁ ἀπερωπότης ὁ Δικαστής, καὶ ἀδωροδοκῆς ἑξέταστής, as † *Chrysostom* speaks, *i. e.* This just Judge, who is no respecter of Persons, no receiver of Bribes, shall call us to an account, we may do it with joy and not with grief. Sure I am, if we would once consider to purpose,

† Περὶ Μετανοίας καὶ Ἑλεημοσύνης.
B.

purpose, that God will one day most certainly come against Sinners, armed with all the weapons of the hottest indignation and fury, the hardiest and stoutest of the Sons of Men would shake and tremble with *Felix*, and hasten to flee from the wrath which is to come. We should not take up only with the form of godliness, but shew the power and efficacy of it in our lives and conversations; we should sift and search our Souls to the bottom, and prepare to meet our God with hearty repentance and humiliation. We should never venture to over-reach our Brethren, to make a prey of the helpless Orphan, or with the *Pharisee*, to devour Widows Houses; but square all our actions according to the exactest rules of equity and justice. For who is he amongst us, that can grapple with Hell? Who can dwell with everlasting Burnings? If the Righteous, Just, and Holy shall scarcely be saved, where shall the Wicked, the Unjust, the Extortioner appear, when God shall come in the Clouds of Heaven to deal fury to his Adversaries, and recompence to his Enemies? When Heaven and Earth shall fly away from the face of the Judge, whose Throne the * Prophet tells us is a Flame of Fire, and

* Dan. 7. 9.

and whose Chariot-wheels burning Fire ?
 When the Sun being turned into Dark-
 ness, and the Moon into Blood ; the Stars
 falling from Heaven, and that too passing
 away with a great noise, and the Firma-
 ment melting with fervent heat ; In a
 word, when the Devils and other repro-
 bate Spirits lamentably howling, and Hell
 dreadfully dilating her self to receive them
 all, the sight shall be so terrible, that the
 Heavenly Attendants themselves shall trem-
 ble ; *Cherubims*, as the * Father
 tells us, shall quake, *Seraphims* * *Chrysost.*
 be astonished, Angels be seized *in loco su-*
 with horror, Arch-Angels with *præcitato.*
 amazement, and all the created Powers of
 Earth and Heaven shake and tremble.
 Again then, since all these things will
 certainly come to pass, let us take care
 to live in all Holy Conversation and God-
 liness, that whensoever our Lord shall come,
 whether in the Evening, or at Midnight,
 or at Cock-crowing, he may not find us
 unjustly harrassing our Fellow Servants,
 and so cut us asunder, and give us our
 portion with the Hypocrites ; but indefa-
 tigably employed in that blessed Work of do-
 ing Justice, and loving Mercy, that so being
 found covered with the robes of Righteous-
 ness, we may also be cloath'd with the gar-
 ments of Salvation.

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Last.

Lastly, You have seen , that God is
 Good ; so Good, that, as the ve-
 ry † Heathen confesseth, he can-
 not do any thing , but what
 tends to the Happiness and Wel-
 fare of his Creatures. Let us
 then never be so ungrateful , so disinge-
 nuous, as to affront or offend our Friend
 and Benefactor. Him, who both at first
 in his mercy brought us forth out of the
 abyss of emptiness and nothing, and also
 still graciously upholds us with his hand
 from falling into the same original nothing
 again. Him, who, when we had made
 our selves Slaves to Sin , Children of
 Wrath, and Heirs of Eternal Damnation,
 humbly disrobed himself of all his Glories,
 and for our sakes submitted to the most
 ignominious, as well as painful Death of
 the Cross. Him , who pursues us with
 the daily offers of his Grace , and even
 lays stratagems of mercy for our refor-
 mation. But to speak more particularly ;
 all we , who stile our selves Christians,
 have especially tasted, and seen how gra-
 cious the Lord is. We have long sate
 under his shadow with great delight ,
 whilest his Banner over us has been con-
 tinually Love. We have plighted our
 Faith, and in our Baptism given him our
 Hearts,

† *Hier. in*
aur. Car.
p. 130. Edit.
Lond.

Hearts, and said with the enamour'd and passionate Spouse in the *Canticles*: I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine. Shall any one of us then, after all these charms and endearments, after so many ties and obligations to Love and Obedience, go backward, and walk no longer with our God? God forbid, that this should ever be laid to our charge. For, alas! This is (then which, as that glorious Martyr, St. *Polycarp* generously confessed to the Proconsul, nothing can be more base) even to betray our Lord and Master, after the obligations of Intimacy and Discipleship; and to break the Tables of his Law, after we have been with him on the Mount, and seen the Back-parts of his Glory. This is to provoke God after he hath been most gracious, and to despise his goodness merely because he is merciful. This is to multiply iniquities, because he is ready to multiply Pardons, to kick against the Bowels of his Compassion, and to rebel against the Scepter of his Grace held forth in the tenders of it. And can we think, that the Men, that do these things, shall die the common death of all Men, or be visited after the visitation of all Men? No: However we may flatter our selves, God will undoubtedly

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ly make a new thing, and punish them in a far greater measure, than any other Sinners, that all may understand, that these Men especially have provoked the Lord. They shall have the deepest share in the horrors of that dreadful day, when God shall plead with them from Heaven in the thunder of his Judgments, because they despised, and neglected, and turned their backs upon the still voice of his Mercy. They shall be irrevocably condemned to the lowest place of Torments, and be made the wonder and astonishment of Men and Angels to all Eternity. O then, consider this ye that fearlessly offend your good God, lest his abused Mercy thus turn into fury, and he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you. Consider, I say, all this, and quit your selves like Men. Rouze up the drowsie, sleeping faculties of your unthinking, unreflecting Souls, and then I can easily promise my self, that you will out of mere gratitude, mere ingenuity take care so to behave your selves towards your unwearied, your eternal Benefactor in this World, that, when your Bodies shall lie down in their Beds of Darkness, he will receive your enlarged Souls into those serene and peaceful Mansions, where with all the company of blessed Spirits, they shall

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shall joyfully expect the glorious dawning of that Thrice-happy day, when Bodies and Souls shall be re-united, and with Joy and Singing enter into the Glory of the Lord.

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